Walsall
CHRONICLE

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Policy branded 'absurd' as request turned down

ROW OVER ROAD NAME TRIBUTE

Report by Jack Averty

A LONG-standing councillor has hit out at 'absurd' rules which mean a road in Walsall cannot be named after a former colleague.

Residents in Darlaston had wanted a road named after Bill Madeley, a former mayor who had freedom of the borough and served on the council for more than 40 years.

But their request was rejected due to a long standing policy which means roads in Walsall cannot be named after people.

Councillor Madeley

Councillor Doug James claims the policy was brought into force when someone wanted to name a road after Nelson Mandela.

He said: "A lot of people had asked me how we could remember Bill and one of the suggestions put forward was to name a new road after him.

"The development of the old Servis site immediately sprang to mind. I asked the council if this was possible but was told no because of a policy. I find the absurd bureaucracy of Walsall Council beyond belief at times.

"If anyone deserves recognition in our town we should be making an exception to rigid rules for former Mayor, Freeman of Walsall and local councillor William Stanley Madeley."

Simon Neilson, the executive director for economy and environment at Walsall Council, said: "This has been a long standing policy for many decades and the current council procedure on street naming reflects the resolution adopted in July 1986.

"Council policies are determined by the council, and Councillor James can ask members to consider amending this policy through the appropriate channels."

Some 300 people turned out to Mr Madeley's funeral in January. He died aged 82, after a battle with liver cancer. He was first elected as a Labour councillor in May 13, 1971 to represent the Bentley ward, which later became Bentley and Darlaston North.

He went on to become mayor in 1988, deputy leader of the council in 1997 and then took on the role of leader of the council from January to May 1999. He was awarded his MBE in 2006 and was admitted as Honorary Freemen of the Borough back in 2010.

SADNESS AS STORE SHUTS FOR LAST TIME

Manager Julie Davies, centre, wearing white top, with her staff as BHS in Walsall closes its doors for the final time

BARE shelves, emotional staff and customers on the hunt for last minute bargains – doomed BHS has shut its doors in Walsall.

The retailer collapsed and went into administration in April affecting more than 11,000 workers throughout the country.

At the town centre's Park Street branch, 36 people have lost their jobs and on Saturday staff signed each other's shirts, reflected on fond memories and also vented their anger at the demise of a high street stalwart.

Jeanine Hare, 62, who has worked at the shop for 16 years, said: "This last week has been really emotional, seeing all of the stock go and the empty spaces just get bigger, it is the end of an era."

Margaret Jones, who has worked at the store for 17 years, added: "It is devastating."

Tearful colleague Emma Lingard, who has served for three years, said: "I am devastated beyond belief. I have made some really good friends and I am just really gutted."

It is now understood discussions are taking place about future tenants for the large unit at the end of the high street near Gallery Square. Walsall store manager Julie Davies has worked for the company for 34 years after starting out as a Saturday girl in Wolverhampton. She said: "I would like to thank the amazing staff that we have got here. I would also like to thank all of the loyal customers who have supported us for 20 years."

Branch operations manager John Hearnshaw said it been an emotional final week, while customers taking advantage of final day sales voiced their sadness. Iris Williams, 81, from Shelfield, said: "I am sorry to see the end of BHS in Walsall. It should never have been allowed to happen."

TERROR

Dry cleaners guilty of funding ISIS brother

TWO Walsall dry cleaning owners have been found guilty, along with a friend, of funding their ISIS terrorist brother by selling his BMW and wife's wedding gold.

A jury at the Old Bailey in London convicted Mohammed Iqbal Hussain and Mohamed Suyaubur Rohaman – owners of All Season launderette in Caldmore – of sending £10,000 to their brother Musadikur Rohaman and his wife Zohurs Siddeka who had fled to Syria to join the fundamentalists.

Also found guilty was Mohammed Atiqur Rahman Khan who took out credit cards in the jihadist's name. Sentencing will take place in September 9.

● Full story – page 12

HOLIDAYS

End fines, call for term-time breaks

A Walsall councillor has urged the authority to adopt a similar stance on term time holiday fines as Staffordshire County Council. Parents who take their children out of schools in Staffordshire for holidays of up to 10 days will no longer be fined, under new temporary measures.

Now Councillor Doug James, who represents Darlaston North and is a governor at four schools across the borough, has asked that the authority take a similar stance, stating 'fines don't work'.

TRAVELLERS

Enforcement action causes headache

TRAVELLERS have spread out around The Delves prompting a headache for council officials trying to evict them. Around 50 caravans arrived on Delves Green on July 29.

Walsall Council were due to evict them last Friday, August 5. However the night before the travellers moved off the plot, to be replaced by another batch, rendering any enforcement action useless.

Now caravans are spread out with more than 10 on Delves Green, 20 on fields to the north of Walstead Road and another 20 on a patch of land to the south of the road.

● Camps – Page 4

INSIDE:

FANS APPLAUD THE SADDLERS

PAGE 8

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Thanks as money raised for operation

Jessica Kill, of Streetly

A MOTHER-of-two has won a race against time to raise £180,000 for an overseas operation to save her from paralysis.

Jessica Kill, from Streetly, has a rare genetic disorder and needs urgent treatment before it leaves her paralysed. The surgery is only available in the US, where it has a 95 per cent success rate.

Ms Kill has been in constant pain since Christmas due to the condition, called Ehlers Danlos, which affects the collagen tissues within the body.

Despite suffering since her early 20s, she has managed to stay independent and worked full time until December, when she developed a related condition, called cranial cervical instability. Since then, the 'glue' holding Jessica's body together is too weak and the ligaments in the neck are too stretched and weakened to support her head.

As Jessica, mother to eight-year-old Finley and Louis, 16, has to travel outside of the EU for her operation, she has been left without funding help from the NHS. The 38 year old took to crowd-funding in May, calling it her 'only hope' to raise the money needed for the operation, which was originally £150,000.

Despite being hit by a setback over the last three weeks and having to raise a further £30,000, Ms Kill has now hit her final target of £180,000 and is getting ready to fly out for her operation.

In a post on her crowd-funding page, she wrote: "I can't thank everyone enough for all of their hard work and generosity over the past 15 weeks. You have been incredible.

"Thank You all so much xxxxxxx."

Jail for attack to 'get even' after race slur

A ROMANIAN punched, kicked and stamped on a man in Walsall to 'get even' after being racially abused, a court heard.

Cosmin Florin, aged 22, had been drinking in the town centre when he encountered Colran Collins, with one asking the other for a cigarette.

But the court heard that the atmosphere quickly soured and racist slurs were aimed at Florin, who had only been in the UK since January.

This 'provoked' the violent attack. The victim was kicked in the head on seven occasions and stamped on four times. The court heard Mr Collins was fortunate to escape with only cuts and bruising following the assault in the early hours of July 5.

Judge James Burbidge QC, sentencing at Wolverhampton Crown Court, said: "You punched him a number of times so he fell to the ground and then when he was prone you kicked him several times.

"Then you stamped on him twice. At that point you walked away but you went back and stamped on him again.

Captured

"That was serious violent conduct."

Prosecuting, Gareth Walters, said Mr Collins could remember little about the incident having been drunk, but most of it was captured on CCTV.

Footage showed Florin – who has no previous convictions – chasing Mr Collins who at one stage was forced to hide behind a tree. After around 20 minutes the pair came face-to-face and the assault took place.

Florin, of William Street, Walsall, maintains he had been assaulted by Mr Collins in the course of the night, but there was no evidence of this from CCTV, said Mr Walters. In interview, Florin added he attacked Mr Collins to "get even" and knew what he had done was wrong.

Defending, Jodie Smith, said her client moved to the UK to make a better life for himself and the attack had been a "red mist moment."

Florin admitted attempting to cause grievous bodily harm with intent and was sentenced to three years and eight months behind bars. Judge Burbidge QC added that the authorities may seek to deport Florin, but no order was made by the court.

Heralding band's search for new blood

Roger Bates and Jude Green, aged seven, at Walsall Cricket Club, where Walsall Brass Band rehearse

A BRASS band is looking for new players to bolster its sound.

he Walsall Brass Band was set up in 2014 by Roger Bates, aged 69, a keen musician who was inspired to play by his musical father and started playing the piano before graduating onto brass.

Roger, who is keen to add to its 10 members over the next few months, said: "What we are hoping to get is up to about 20 players. If you have a full brass band you have about 27, 28 players."

He added potential players could range 'from competent to virtuoso' – although they must normally have obtained grade four on their instrument before being considered. But other players who have not achieved that could be invited to join the band's training group.

The band is especially looking for players who could play first trombone and euphonium to play music from their wide repertoire. It usually starts playing hymns at concerts, then sometimes plays classical pieces, music from shows and other pop classics.

The band meets every Tuesday, from 7.45pm until 9.30pm, at Walsall Cricket Club on Gorway Road.

Roger said recently the band had been playing hits by Adele, ABBA and the Village People's classic YMCA. He said the band had a music teacher who could help any flourishing musicians improve.

Call 07954 158858 or 01922 633279 or email walsallbrassband@virginmedia.com

Action call at alleyway blighted by flytipping

RESIDENTS in Walsall have called for action to be taken to clear a public alleyway blighted by flytipping.

The Caldmore Neighbourhood Watch Group say the alley from Caldmore Road to Bath Street has been targeted by fly-tippers and vandals for a number of years and they are the 'only people' willing to help with the situation.

In recent weeks, a fridge and a shopping trolley have been left in the alley, while problems with graffiti persist.

Neighbourhood watch group spokesman Arjun Chand said: "This public alleyway has been neglected for many years by the council, local St Mathew's councillors, and area panel groups with regular flytipping taking place there.

"Litter and rubbish have been dumped constantly.

"There are branches overhanging in the alleyway, graffiti on the wall and it smells of urine. We have seen drug activity taking place there which has been mentioned to the police.

"With so many problem in this alleyway, our group seem to be the only ones trying to address the problems."

Mr Chand said the group had been asking for CCTV to be installed at the site since 2012 but nothing had been done. He said: "We showed that this graffiti could have been removed if the authorities had tried and there was no graffiti for two years.

"It seemed our group over the many years to this day were the only ones showing interest and trying to stop the problems in this alleyway."

Bhangra group's special invitation

A BHANGRA dancing group which took home trophies at a long-established festival in Wales were invited to a special evening with the Mayor of Sandwell.

The Gabhru Panjab De (GPD) Bhangra Dancers won the choreographed and stylised folk dance group competition, and children's folk dance group competition, at the 70th annual Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod in July.

In recognition of their achievements, the talented troupe were invited by Mayor Julie Webb to the Mayor's Parlour in The Big House, with congratulations also give by Councillor Preet Kaur Gill.

Councillor Webb said: "It was a real pleasure to welcome the dancers and their families to the Big House."

Youngsters can help create giant collage

YOUNGSTERS can help create a giant collage at Walsall New Art Gallery on Saturday.

The free workshop takes place at the Gallery Square venue from 11am to 4pm. Visit http://thenewartgallerywalsall.org.uk/ or call 01922 654 400.

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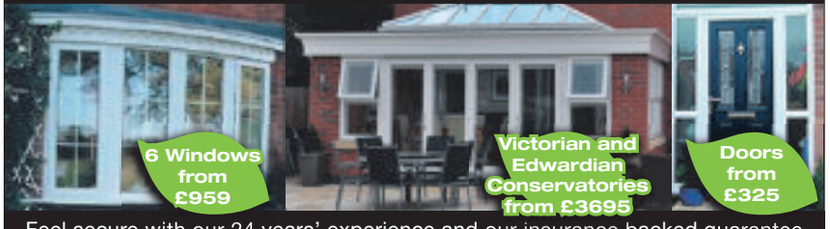

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Parades on the agenda for force's top brass

THE West Midlands Police & Crime Commissioner is working with Black Country councils to ensure roads can be closed free of charge for this year's Remembrance Day parades.

Parades across the the region were put in jeopardy after it was revealed a change in West Midlands Police policy means closing roads for the parades to honour fallen soldiers is now the responsibility of organisers – who face costly bills for professional traffic management contractors.

Letters seen by the Express & Star state a decision has been made by the Chief Constable of West Midlands Police to introduce a change of policy by which the authority will no longer provide officers to carry out traffic management duties and enforce road closures for the parade.

A meeting was held between West Midlands Police & Crime Commissioner David Jamieson, the Chief Constable of West Midlands Police, Dave Thompson and Deputy Chief Constable Louisa Rolfe.

Following the meeting, spokeswoman for the West Midlands Police & Crime Commissioner, Liz Joyce said: "We are working closely with councils on a common sense solution that sees roads closed free of charge.

"West Midlands Police has already committed the same number of police officers to work the parades as previous years – and many more officers will volunteer their free time on the day. David Jamieson will not let red tape and bureaucracy stop us honouring our fallen soldiers."

Mental health crisis for young

YOUNG people with serious mental health problems are waiting up to 18 months for treatment at Black Country hospitals, new figures have revealed.

In Walsall, children battling depression, self harm and eating disorders are waiting up to 80 weeks to see a specialist, while in Dudley waiting times of nearly a year were recorded.

The figures were revealed in a Freedom of Information request which shows the longest waiting times between referral and first treatment at 31 of the country's mental health trusts. Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust recorded one of the longest waiting times in the country, with youngsters in Walsall waiting 80 weeks to see a psychologist in November 2015.

The longest waiting time at the trust between referral and first appointment in non-specialist areas was 40 days, according to the figures.

Mark Axcell, acting chief executive officer at DWMH, said that while the trust considered any unreasonably long waiting times to be unacceptable, 'those quoted are certainly not typical of our day to day performance'. He added that long waiting times were often due to 'unusual circumstances'.

Grandson and lotto win on same day

Jill Rushton and winner Alison Barker

A BURNTWOOD mother had a day to remember after scooping a £2,000 lottery jackpot and welcoming her first grandchild. Alison Barker, from Chasetown, won the St Giles Hospice Lottery on the same day her grandchild Charlie Benjamin was born.

The emergency nurse practitioner began supporting St Giles Hospice along with her husband Graham and stepson Chris after her mum Joy Radford was cared for at a hospice in Exeter before she passed away.

Mrs Barker said: "My support for hospices started when I lost my mum in 2000, after she was really well looked after at a hospice in Exeter, which is where we lived before moving to Staffordshire.

"When we moved here I wanted to work for St Giles Hospice. However a more permanent position in the NHS came up first, but it really made me understand the importance of supporting their work."

Since it was established in 1997, the St Giles Hospice Lottery has raised over £15 million for the charity and is one of the most successful lotteries of its kind in the UK For £1 a week, St Giles Hospice Lottery players give themselves the chance to win a £2,000 jackpot, plus a host of other prizes whilst supporting St Giles at the same time, with all proceeds going towards hospice care.

Speaking on her £2,000 prize, Mrs Barker said: "I couldn't believe it when I found out I'd won, it's so fantastic and it was made even better when my grandchild Charlie Benjamin was born on the same day."

To sign up to the St Giles Hospice Lottery, visit www.stgileshospice.com/lottery or call 01543 434020.

A new lease of life for Hooch after skin illness

A YOUNG dog has been given a new lease of life after nearly being put down due to a chronic skin condition.

Hooch, a 14-month old rottweiler cross from Bloxwich, was diagnosed with generalised demodicosis, which is also known as demodectic mange, and often causes irritation, hair loss and widespread inflammation.

He had been suffering with the condition for nine months and had previously been prescribed a number of special shampoos and medications. However, when they didn't work, it was suggested that his owner, Gaynor Burrows, and her family should consider euthanasia, which prompted them to contact White Cross Vets in Leamore Lane, Bloxwich.

The vets then put Hooch on a course of antibiotics which have resulted in a turnaround in his wellbeing. Gaynor, who lives in Bloxwich, says: "We only had Hooch a few months when we started seeing a number of sore patches on his skin which gradually became worse and in some areas developed into open wounds.

Prescriptions

"It was distressing to see because it was clearly making him uncomfortable. We consulted a vet and spent hundreds of pounds on prescriptions and shampoos but nothing was working. At that point, the vet suggested we should consider putting him down, but he's such a young and loving dog who has immediately become a big part of our family, so we owed it to him to at least get a second opinion.

"The team at White Cross Vets were against euthanising him, which we were delighted about and they prescribed a course of antibiotics. After just two weeks we saw an immediate improvement. His skin was noticeably better and he's like a different dog now. To think we might have put him down doesn't bear thinking about."

Vet David Jones, who treated Hooch at White Cross Vets in Bloxwich, said: "Putting down such a young dog and a beloved pet should always be the last option.

"As soon as I saw Hooch, I knew there were several options that could improve his condition. Thankfully the first course of antiparasitic tablets we tried were successful and although he might have to take tablets for the rest of his life, it's fantastic that he can get back to normal and enjoy life again."

The skin condition that nearly cost Hooch his life

Rottweiler Hooch, who is now back to normal

Tribute to mother believed killed

THE daughter of a woman who police believe was killed by a man, before he jumped to his death, has paid tribute to her. Human remains believed to be those of 46-year-old Gina Lander, from Walsall, were found in a drain at her home.

Gina Lander,

She had previously been reported missing on March 16 by partner David Stokes, 39.

He then jumped to his death off a motorway bridge between Junction 9 and 10 of the M6, near Walsall, on April 21.

Detectives now believe that father-of-two Mr Stokes committed suicide after he murdered Ms Lander, disposed of her body and then reported her missing.

At an inquest in Oldbury last Wednesday, coroner Zafar Siddique concluded that she was unlawfully killed and that Mr Stokes committed suicide.

Following this, Ms Lander's daughter Shireen Harper paid tribute to her mother on Facebook, including a link to an online report of the case. She said: "I appreciate everyone's support over the past few months, and the respect for my privacy. "While this makes mum's passing very real, it's a relief that this has finally been ruled on."

She said she was a 'beautiful kind woman' and added: "It has been an incredibly long and hard five months."

Miss Harper added: "I would just like to say that my mum was a beautiful passionate woman who loved travelling and life. She was passionate about teaching and loved her students to bits. We are shocked any one would hurt her."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Another driver caught short

A SECOND bus driver has been snared spending a penny by the infamous Urine Watch.

The Twitter account, which regularly posts pictures of yobs publicly urinating at a site in Bradford Street in Walsall, has caught a second bus driver after snapping a National Express one earlier this year.

The weeing driver

A video tweeted out last Tuesday morning showed a man in a hi-vis jacket saunter up to the popular site before taking a look at the security camera and starting to wee.

One tweet from @urinewatch read: "Peeing bus drivers strike again. Who can name and shame the bus company? #walsallwee" while a second, this time accompanied by a still from the video with the offender staring directly at the camera, said: "Yes mate. It's a camera #walsallwee"

Chris Norton, who runs Norton Podiatry, set up the account to try and stop the stem of public urinators who were weeing in the car park of the former M Latif and Sons in Bradford Street next door to his surgery.

He has been posting the CCTV images of yobs online since March and now has nearly 200 followers.

Footballers at charity event

WALSALL footballers past and present will attend a charity event aimed at helping homeless people across the West Midlands.

A family fun day, organised by AS Suffa Homeless Outreach, will take place at Pleck Railway Club, Wednesbury Road, Walsall, on Sunday from 1pm until 6pm.

It will feature the likes of Sean Geddes and Mark Taylor. The match kicks off at 2pm.

Manor exceeds cap on deliveries

WALSALL Manor Hospital is still delivering more babies than it should be despite a cap on the number of births a year. The limit was implemented to reduce the number of deliveries this year to 4,200 after the Care Quality Commission rated maternity services inadaquate.

According to figures for June, the trust oversaw 392 births against a target of 345.

Orchestra to play

THE Senior Citizens Orchestra will perform at Walsall's Forest Arts Centre on September 1. The orchestra will perform a range of classical favourites from 2pm. Tickets costing £1 are available on the door or can be booked in advance on 0300 555 2898.

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THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

YOU know how it is when you read a court case and think, no, that can't be right. A driver in Norfolk was clocked driving at 154 mph in something called a Seat Leon Cupra . The magistrates ordered him to pay £365 and banned him for 56 days. At first I assumed either the speed or the sentence was wrongly reported. But no, it seems the going rate for driving at 94 mph over the speed limit in Norfolk is a little less than two months off the roads. Police have described the sentence as "disappointing" which demolishes my initial theory that the 21-year-old driver must have been the Chief Constable's lad.

THE Seat Leon Cupra, incidentally, is capable of 155mph. Why is such a car offered for sale in a country where the maximum limit is 70mph? How does a 21-year-old get insurance to drive it?

THIS week saw yet another doomed attempt by the so-called energy watchdog Ofgem to persuade punters to shop around for the best energy deals. Why are we so reluctant? Because we don't like playing damn silly games with strangers. I am convinced that whoever dreamed up the current system of multiple power companies tempting us with money-saving tariffs was inspired by the board game, Snakes and Ladders. You stay with one deal until the price suddenly shoots up. You switch to another and the price slithers down. A few weeks pass and the price goes up again. And with every change you are bombarded with junk mail and have to arrange a new direct debit.

NO, no, Donald. You're supposed to kiss the baby, not chuck it out of the meeting. American politics is founded on babies, motherhood and apple pie. Trump has managed to bad-mouth the first two in a single week. How long before he is overheard muttering:"Goddam apple pie, I hate it."

AND off to Sudeley Castle in the Cotswolds. As at so many attractions, there is a discount for over-60s in the belief that old people who can afford to wander around mediaeval castles are all living in grinding poverty. What happens in practice is that grey-haired folk glide into the car park in their BMWs and Mercs and get £1 knocked off the entry fee while ordinary working couples turn up in battered old people carriers and pay the full whack.

A FRIEND'S new house boasts four lavatories. Three are the modern, eco-friendly, water-saving WCs. The fourth is an old-fashioned low-level job with a cistern connected to the pan by a short pipe. The strange part is that the old-fashioned bog works perfectly with one flush but the modern ones have to be flushed twice.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Support lacking for work hopefuls

MORE than half of young people in the West Midlands said they had no support from anyone when searching for a job, the results of a poll have revealed.

A total of 54 per cent of those aged between 16 and 25 complained of the lack of support when asked by the Prince's Trust. The trust has also revealed it has returned an estimated £134 million in 'value to society' in the West Midlands in the last 10 years. John O'Reilly, director for The Prince's Trust in Central England, said: "There is a social bank of mum and dad which can open as many doors as the financial bank of mum and dad.

"Sadly, not all young people have the same access to it, and all too often young people are locked out of jobs and other opportunities simply because of where they've started in life.

"Those who received more help with extracurricular activities, homework or finding work experience are also more likely to have higher aspirations, be higher earners and have a more positive outlook on life today."

Mr O'Reilly added the research findings show clear evidence of social immobility linked to a lack of inherited opportunities. A total of 44 per cent of young people from poorer backgrounds said they didn't know anyone who could help them find a job, compared to 26 per cent of their more advantaged peers.

While 20 per cent of those questioned found some work experience through their parents, only 10 per cent from a poorer background said they did.

Protect us from these traveller camps – MP

Report by Peter Madeley

A BLACK Country MP has hit out at Walsall Council over 'meaningless' promises on solving the borough's problems with travellers after two more sites had been taken over.

Dozens of travellers descended on Manor Farm in Rushall for the third time in the last few months, while an illegal camp of seven caravans was set up in Anchor Meadow, Aldridge.

The group later left the Manor Farm site, but council bosses say they are trying to reclaim the land 'as quickly as possible'.

Aldridge-Brownhills Conservative MP Wendy Morton said she was at her wits' end with travellers taking over the borough's open spaces.

She said she had raised the issue with Walsall Council on a number of occasions, without any 'decisive action' being taken. "I am now saying to the local authority that enough is enough," she said.

"The borough is repeatedly the site of traveller encampments. They often leave behind a horrible mess, with human waste and nappies strewn around everywhere.

"People feel extremely worried and intimidated. I would ask the council how much more they expect residents to put up with."

Mrs Morton has written to the authority's chief executive Paul Sheehan demanding that more is done to protect residents.

Assurances

She wrote: "It is not fair to law abiding residents to have to suffer yet again, and so as long as spaces such as these remain vulnerable to unauthorised encampments, assurances from Walsall Council that long term solutions are being looked in to, will continue to appear meaningless."

In March last year the Government published guidance for local authorities called 'dealing with illegal and unauthorised encampments– a summary of available powers'.

Mrs Morton added: "This information has been available to the council for more than a year, yet I don't believe they have used all of the powers available to them."

Councillor Julie Fitzpatrick, portfolio holder for public protection, said: "We are aware of the impact that unauthorised encampments have on residents in Walsall and where these occur officers give a high priority to the work needed to secure a legal eviction.

"Our officers work within government guidelines using the powers at their disposal and supported by the police and other parties to evict them. Officers have attended the site of the unauthorised encampment and are following the legal process to regain possession of the land as quickly as they can."

A number of caravans and motorhomes parked at Anchor Meadow

Last month council bosses vowed to tackle ongoing issues involving travellers.

At that time Councillor Lee Jeavons, deputy leader of Walsall Council, said the issue would be prioritised, with a working group proposed to look into how it could best be addressed.

Under current council policy, officers from the authority attend sites with encampments and carry out a risk assessment, which includes a log of all vehicles and caravans present. Welfare assessments are also carried out.

A notice to vacate occupied land is usually served within 24 hours, which is followed by an application to the Magistrates Court for an eviction order.

Evictions are rare, as most travellers move on to another site before the order comes into force.

Illegal traveller camps have blighted the Walsall landscape over the past two years. A group of 30 caravans appeared at Pleck Park, while Millfield Avenue, Bloxwich, also saw camps set up in recent weeks. Delves Common was hit twice at the end of May, with travellers leaving piles of rubbish behind after a three-day stop-off at a pitch opposite Delves Junior School.

In April a dozen caravans and associated vehicles set up on the Wakes Car and Lorry Park, while other camps have appeared at Goscote Lodge Crescent and Broadway West Playing Fields. Earlier this year Walsall Council set aside a number of pitches to accommodate travellers, although six of them were scrapped following floods of complaints from residents.

Opening is cut down for Asda with 24-hour halt

THE Asda superstore in Walsall Town Centre has stopped opening 24 hours.

The George Street store will now not open any later than 11pm Monday to Friday and 10pm on Saturday. Its Sunday hours of 10am to 4pm will remain the same.

Asda has said that it would be 'more sensible' to change the opening hours after conducting a review.

But Labour Councillor Aftab Nawaz, who represents the St Matthew's ward, has disagreed with the decision and added that he will be writing them a letter asking them to reconsider.

He said: "There is a lot of people in St Matthew's and the surrounding areas close to Asda who use the store late at night.

"St Matthew's is one of the most deprived areas in Walsall and people use it to get a cheap bottle of milk for their family. After 11pm now they will have to go to a corner shop where it may be more expensive or to Tesco – but some people are not able to make it as far as Tesco.

"It would have been good if Asda spoke to residents before they made their decision.

"This closure of the 24 hours is also a concern with jobs and I would like Asda to give me some assurances that it will not lead to any job losses."

A spokesman for Asda said: "After reviewing the store opening times and considering both the business and customer needs, it was agreed that it would be more sensible to amend the opening hours of the store."

Caroline braves shave for cause

A POST lady has 'braved the shave' after losing two aunties and three uncles to cancer.

Caroline Brown, who is based at the Landywood Delivery Office which covers Great Wyrley and Cheslyn Hay, decided to have her hair shaved off in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support. It continues to be an important cause to Caroline's family, with her sister-in-law and brother-in-law both currently undergoing treatment, as well as a work colleague.

Caroline Brown

Caroline was particularly brave as she allowed the shave to be done by her manager at the Landywood Delivery Office, Ross Jones. Fortunately, he used to be a hairdresser.

It is the latest in a series of fundraisers by Caroline. She has run the London Marathon for Hearing Dogs For Deaf People, The Great North Run for Acorns Children's Hospice and The Royal Parks Half marathon for The Stroke Association. To sponsor Caroline go to bravetheshave.org.uk/shav ers/caroline-brown-2/

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Dog walker gran killed in collision remembered

TRIBUTES have poured in for a Great Wyrley grandmother who lost her life while she was out walking her dog. Ann Walton, aged 79, was out with her daughter Susan, 59, and their dog when they were in collision with a car in a country lane.

The pair were airlifted to Royal Stoke University Hospital where Ann later died. Susan was in a 'critical condition' but is now understood to be recovering.

The driver of the car was uninjured, while the dog was taken to a local vets.

Since the news of the fatal crash in Jones Lane, near to the junction with Jacob Hall's Lane, the tributes have flooded in on Facebook.

Bryn Walton, the brother of Susan and son of tragic Ann, said: "RIP mom I will miss you so much you and dad are together again we're going to miss you both, in my heart you both always will be I love you both so much."

Resident Tracey Cole added: "I do know that they are a part of our community in Great Wyrley and have spoken to them on a occasions and fussed their dog with my daughter.

"Many people will know these ladies as they are often seen walking around Cheslyn Hay and Great Wyrley. I would like to send all my love to the family X"

The incident happened around 8.25am on Saturday July 30. A statement from the police on behalf of the family read: "The family of Ann and Susan Walton would like to thank friends and family for their support at this extremely difficult time following the incident on the 30th July 2016 which has led to the untimely passing of their beloved Ann, a devoted and treasured mother and grandmother."

Chiefs' joy as exclusions fall

BOSSES at Walsall Council have hailed a reduction in school exclusion figures in the borough.

The latest figures from the Department for Education showed the number of pupils expelled from schools in Walsall dropped to 53 in 2014-15 from 57 the previous year.

The authority was the only one in the Black Country and Staffordshire to see a fall in exclusions over the period.

Councillor Rose Burley, portfolio holder for children's services and education, said: "Walsall Council actively works with all schools to ensure permanent exclusions are avoided as much as possible.

"Whilst we acknowledge that the number of exclusions remains high, we are pleased with a continuing picture of reduction in the proportion of children permanently excluded from state primary, secondary and special schools."

Across the region 363 pupils were expelled from state-run primary, secondary and special schools last year, up 25 per cent from 2013-14.

Tributes paid to 'exceptional' teacher

Former teacher Katie Humpage

TRIBUTES have been paid to the 'exceptionally talented' teacher who was found dead at her Walsall home.

The body of Katie Humpage was discovered by her parents at her flat in Burrowes Street, Birchills, on Tuesday July 26. The 32-year-old worked at South Wolverhampton and Bilston Academy up until her death and had previously taught at Willenhall E-ACT Academy. An inquest into her death was opened at the Black Country Coroner's Court in Oldbury.

It was adjourned until September 15 for further reports and evidence to be gathered. Kerry Inscker, principal at South Wolverhampton and Bilston Academy, said: "Miss Humpage was an exceptionally talented teacher and leader who was very highly regarded by staff and students.

"She was passionate about teaching English and was dedicated to her students, she had a hugely positive impact on us all. Katie was a beautiful and elegant young woman, her loss is very deeply felt at SWB Academy."

A fundraising page set up in Miss Humpage's memory has already raised more than £1,200 for the mental health charity Mind. People have also used the page to pay tribute to the popular teacher.

Amy Butler posted: "Thank you for everything you did for so many of us. Hope you have now found your peace you will be missed x."

Express & Star reporter Joe Edwards, who was taught by Miss Humpage for more than three years at Willenhall E-ACT Academy, said: "Deeply saddened to hear we have lost Katie. A truly inspirational woman who went out of her way to help myself and hundreds of others."

£23k boost for woman felled by goats cheese

A WOMAN left bed-bound after eating goats cheese in Greece is set to benefit from a £23,000 funding pot to get her life-changing treatment.

Sam Philpott, aged 22, developed a severe infection after eating a selection of the unpasteurised cheese on holiday in Kos, Greece, three years ago.

Miss Philpott, from Walsall, unknowingly ingested a potentially fatal bacteria called brucellosis. Just weeks after returning home, the former nursery assistant, started to suffer from debilitating migraines, constant vomiting and intense pain all over her body.

Her condition worsened within weeks as she lost the ability to walk and became reliant on a wheelchair. Now she has been left with a list of extreme flu-like symptoms, as well as memory loss, insomnia and speech loss. She believes it was the eating of the cheese that caused her to ingest the bacteria.

She was diagnosed with Fibromyalgia, a condition which leaves parts of the body extremely sore and stiff, but her family now believe she was misdiagnosed and actually has a severe form of Lyme disease.

Bubbly

A Go Fund Me page has been set up to try to send Miss Philpott to Sponaugle Wellness Institute in America, which has successfully cured many cases of Lyme disease.

The family have been advised that she would need to attend the Institute for around three months, meaning the cost of treatment, accommodation, flights and living costs would be some £60,000.

So far more than £23,000 has been raised but the family is appealing for more donations.

A passage on the website reads: "Sam was once a bubbly young lady with a lot of life in her. She always had a smile on her and was a pleasure to be around. She is suffering right now and there isn't much time left. If Lyme disease isn't treated, what it leads to doesn't bear thinking about. Be part of her recovery."

Miss Philpott, who ate cheese on her pizzas, sandwiches and in her salads on the 2013 holiday, said: "Who knew that unpasteurised cheese, that is delicious and has brought me much momentary happiness, could cause the mind-numbing and wanting-to-end-my-life type of pain that I have been suffering with."

To donate toward Miss Philpott's treatment visit www.gofundme.com/28hc6v6g

Judges impressed by flower power

Mayor Kath Phillips, front left, with judges Trish Willetts and Graham Redfern and supporters

GARDENING experts continued their tour to find Walsall blooming as part of their judging of the Heart of England in Bloom competition.

Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) judges visited Brownhills and Bloxwich to decide if they will be passed into the next stage of the competition.

And in Bloxwich before the official tour started, judges Graham Redfern and Trish Willetts were joined in the Promenade Gardens by Walsall's mayor Councillor Kath Phillips and her colleague, cabinet member for community, leisure and centre, Councillor Julie Fitzpatrick.

Volunteers also helped show them around, including surely Walsall's youngest gardener, Councillor Fitzpatrick's one-year-old grandson.

Regular and dedicated planting, pruning and watering meant judges were treated to a spectacle at both destinations, which, like the three other areas around Walsall, are competing in the Urban Community category.

Councillor Julie Fitzpatrick said: "The Mayor and I were very proud to escort the Royal Horticultural Society judges. All the hard work that went into the tour was very much in evidence as Bloxwich and Brownhills were absolutely blooming brilliant."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Bus changes are labelled ' mess'

A COUNCILLOR has described changes to bus services in Walsall as'a bit of a mess'.

Recent alterations to services through New Invention have seen the number 28 from Willenhall to Wolverhampton and the 40 from Walsall to Wolverhampton removed.

Willenhall North councillor Ian Shires said residents were complaining about disruption.

He said: "We are already receiving negative vibes off members of the long suffering travelling public. All in all it's a bit of a mess."

Charity base CCTV after vandalism

A CHARITY can install CCTV cameras at the listed building it uses as a base following a spate of vandalism.

Walsall Council has granted consent for the Crisis Point charity, which works with victims of sexual crime and is based at Uplands House on Lichfield Road, to install cameras at the Grade 2 listed building.

An application submitted to the authority said it was feared the incident of vandalism may escalate.

It said damage had been caused to the gates access and other structures related to fire safety regulations.

New plan call for campus car park

A WALSALL MP has urged university bosses to scrap plans for a new car park exit that leads onto one of the town's busiest roads.

The university wants to build a car park at its Walsall campus with a route leading out onto Broadway.

Walsall South MP Valerie Vaz believes it is a 'waste of funds' and 'an unnecessary nuisance to local residents'. She is asking for a new application to be submitted using the existing site entrance from Magdalene Road.

Bridge opened at leisure gardens

A NEW bridge has opened at West Walsall Leisure Gardens.

A community barbecue was held to mark the opening with Pleck councillor Naheed Gultasib. The bridge was opened after Walsall Council provided funding.

As a thank you from the authority's Clean and Green group's Alison Bates, the group named the structure Alison's Bridge.

Go hell for leather at craft workshops

YOUNGSTERS can try their hand at making leather crafts during workshops on Tuesdays.

Drop-in sessions will be held at Walsall Leather Museum from 10.30am to 3.30pm on August 16 and 23. Sessions cost £1 per child.

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Cloudy2Clear Announce Trusted Trader Partnership

Consumer champions Which? have now joined the thousands of customers who recognise that Cloudy2Clear Windows really are a business that you can TRUST. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has received the coveted 'Which Trusted Trader' status after going through a rigorous accreditation process entirely focussed on customer service.

Group Managing Director Marcus McGee believes that Which? have endorsed Cloudy2Clear's long standing company policy of delivering the highest standards possible at all times. 'Our service is simple. If your double glazing has misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 5 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people money, although that obviously helps. Whilst a number of tradespeople perhaps don't focus on customer care as much as they should do, we make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle.

Locally Cloudy2Clear service Walsall & the surrounding areas and manager Brian Stanley agrees that this approach is a major factor in his success. 'The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated as both my customers and, obviously a body as nationally important as Which? now recognise.'

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

Liquidator call brings back dark memories

BRING back The Liquidator is the message coming from the crowds at Molineux, who want to hear the classic reggae tune return to match days. More than 750 have signed a petition calling for the Harry J Allstars instrumental to be played at the start of home games, after it was dropped in the 1990s when fans began singing obscenities about their rivals to the tune.

It all reminds me of the dark days in the 1980s, when the Bhatti Brothers were in charge. Nobody was calling for The Liquidator then.

❒❒❒

IT IS 25 years this week since former British hostage John McCarthy was freed from captivity in Beirut. November will mark the 25th anniversary since Terry Waite was freed.

Waite, one might recall, was the Archbishop of Canterbury's special envoy who travelled to Beirut in an attempt to persuade terror group Islamic Jihad to free the hostages, including McCarthy, Second World War hero Jackie Mann, and Irish lecturer Brian Keenan.

He went there on trust, believing that as a man of the church, rather than a politician or diplomat, the terrorists would listen to him.

He was wrong. Instead of honouring the trust placed in them, the men of Islamic Jihad concocted a story about the hostages being ill and needing to see him. They then kidnapped him and kept him in solitary confinement for the best part of five years.

Since his release, Waite has worked tirelessly for several charities, and given up his time to help the families of other hostages. He was made a CBE for his efforts.

Meanwhile, in David Cameron's resignations honours list, Will Straw, the son of former home secretary Jack Straw is also recommended to become a CBE.

His only notable contribution to date is organising the failed campaign for Britain to remain in the EU.

David Cameron's former press secretary Craig Oliver is to be given a knighthood, while a couple of wealthy Tory Party donors are also in line for life peerages.

Is a political spin doctor really to be valued more highly than a man who knowingly put his life on the line in the hope of helping others?

Does spreading scare stories about leaving the EU really equate to a lifetime's selfless charity work?

Surely by now, Terry Waite has done enough to earn a knighthood. And I can't help but think he would use a seat in the House of Lords to far greater impact than any political placeman.

Volunteer Ned Edwards looks at the graves

People on a tour of the war graves cemetery

People on a tour listen to volunteer Mike Price

Great War secrets given up by Chase

Volunteers have made it their mission to tell people of the soldiers who trained there, as Richard Guttridge explains

WITH its sweeping hills, towering trees and flowing streams, Cannock Chase is rightly regarded as one of the finest locations in the Midlands – but many might not know the important role it played during the First World War.

Thousands of soldiers were stationed on the Chase during the Great War, which acted as a huge training base.

A group of volunteers have made it their mission to tell this story.

Thanks to a heritage lottery grant, the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership has been able to arrange bus tours, stopping along the route at points of historical interest.They were originally due to run two bus tours, but were forced to arrange an extra one due to demand.

Isolation

During the First World War, two training camps were set up on the Chase, at Brocton and Rugeley. It was seen as the ideal location due to its isolation, vastness and it was within relatively easy reach for most people.

The tour takes in both the British and German war cemeteries, the two camps and the Great War Hut, where the men who trained on the Chase lived.

Anne Walker, from the group, said: "We have been working with the Friends of Cannock Chase and helping them to get the Heritage Lottery funding.

"A lot of people know the Chase and a lot of people know about the connections with the First World War but they don't necessarily know how to pinpoint those areas.

"We find it much better to give them guided tours rather than to say 'off you go, go and find things', because there are tripping hazards, lumps of coal and practice trenches. There are mini fissures all over the Chase."

Visitors to the Cannock Chase Commonwealth War Cemetery study the graves of soldiers killed in the First World War

Cannock Chase had actually been used for military training for more than 40 years prior to the outbreak of the war. Then in 1914, the camps were set up after the Earl of Lichfield, who owned the estate, agreed to loan the land to the War Office.

But the number of men at the camps would soon be swelled thanks to Lord Kitchener's famous call to arms.

Mrs Walker said: "At the beginning of the First World War the reservist force wasn't very big. The German Army had much greater reserves.

"Suddenly, after Kitchener's 'Your Country Needs You' call, a million men signed up and there were no plans to train them.

"Cannock Chase was important as it was central and had good rail and road links, even in those days."

Rugeley Camp was the first to be completed and Brocton camp soon followed, with each able to train 20,000. It's thought around half a million passed through during the course of the conflict.

Mrs Walker said: "There are stories about the camps. One person told us how their father, who was from Wolverhampton, lied about his age when he was 16 to get into Brocton Camp. He survived the war. A lot of people would lie about their age as they were excited about war and felt they wanted to do their duty."

As for the training itself, Mrs Walker said reports showed it was 'second to none'. She said: "They learned from battles fought previously and came back and put that knowledge into training. The first sniper school was on Cannock Chase."

Philip Howard, 72, from Burntwood, said: "I'm interested in both the First and Second World Wars and I thought it would be interesting to see. I've lived in the area for 40 years and have never seen anything like it."

Put faith in a bright future after EU

I FAIL to see why G Fletcher of Dudley, and many others, assume that all pensioners are just out for what we can get for free.

Most of us have grandchildren and like myself feel that leaving the EU in the long run will be best for them.

I have six grandchildren and have had sensible discussions with the older ones as to why I voted out, and to receive their views on the EU.

G Fletcher is welcome to Tenerife, I went there once and found it to be very stark, and full of the British youth he supports getting drunk and behaving in an objectionable way. I for one am prepared to endure some of the cuts he predicts in order to remove control from Juncker and Merkel to regain our British way of life before it is too late.

I wonder how many migrants G Fletcher has accommodated in his house and is he prepared to take them to Tenerife with him?

I see that G Fletcher is taking his 'young goats' to Tenerife with him which is just as well, as youth unemployment in Spain is 57.7 per cent compared to the rest of the EU at 24.2 per cent and in Britain at 13.6 per cent (2015 figures) therefore any children he might take would find it hard to find employment.

Like most Remainers G Fletcher has not given any reason for wishing to remain in the EU and has just written unsubstantiated nonsense copied from Government scare-mongers.

So farewell G Fletcher of Dudley and as you state Mount Teide is due to erupt soon, and I wonder if we will allow you back then.

G THOMAS
Bloxwich
Walsall

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST
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Baggies only true Black Countrymen

WITH reference to the E&S front page, July 26, I'm sorry to inform people that there is only one true Black Country football team and that's West Bromwich Albion, being that Wolverhampton is not really in the Black Country.

I'm going on a map you published in your newspaper a few years back, which I kept, and it clearly shows Wolverhampton and Walsall are not within the Black Country boundary. I'm sure it's in your archives.

But being that Wolverhampton Council have erected all those signs, saying 'Welcome to the Black Country', I suppose you can be honorary members and carry on pretending to be Black Country folk. I hope I haven't upset the good people of Wolverhampton and their football club but 'yo cor be wot yo ay'. Well, I've ad me little moan, so all the best to yo Wolvo peeple, un kape aht the oss rode.

G SIMPSON
Darlaston

Summertime special as you might like it

'SHALL I compare thee to a Summer's Day? Thou art more lovely and more temperate' to quote Shakespeare's Sonnet 18. So what better way is there to enjoy Shakespeare's work than to be surrounded by a beautiful English garden, with a picnic at hand, good company too on a summer's evening in August?

This summer we celebrate the 400th year since the death of Shakespeare. This special anniversary year is a truly unique opportunity to celebrate the lasting legacy of the world's greatest playwright so join with me for a particularly special performance of Shakespeare's 'As You Like It' and it's just along the road in Wolverhampton!

On 11th/12th August at Wightwick Manor gardens the Folksy Theatre Company bring 'As You Like It' to one of the National Trust's foremost properties and gardens in the West Midlands. Come along to enjoy a wonderful Shakespeare comedy about life, love, betrayal, fortune and death, bold characters, audience interaction and plenty of laughs. Bring along your picnics, folding chairs, and family to enjoy the thrills of an open air performance in a local setting.

CLLR DOUG JAMES
Walsall

Try an art project to boost alley

AFTER reading in the Express & Star about the mess at the Butlers Alley in Walsall and how the council cannot afford to tidy it up, may I suggest a way of doing it up?

Walsall College has art students, why doesn't the council get in touch with the college if as part of their studies they would do the passage up in modern graffiti of say old and new Walsall.

That would surely be a win-win for both the council and the students and would cheer up the residents of the town.

If you don't ask Walsall Council you will never find out if they will.

M T BARKER
Walsall

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

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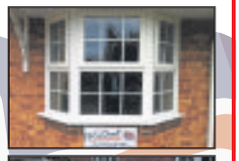
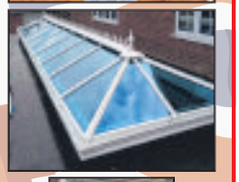

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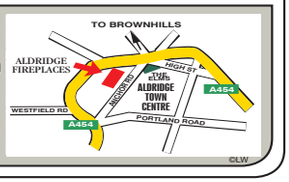

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Leisure centres now open to public

TWO new leisure centres were opening across Walsall this week.

The new Oak Park and Bloxwich Active Living Centres were due to open their doors to the public on Tuesday after months of building and preparation work.

The new multi million pound centres each include a 25-metre swimming pool, teaching pool, six court sports hall, dance studio and cafe.

Councillor Julie Fitzpatrick, Walsall Council's community, leisure and culture boss, said: "Opening these doors for the first time is very exciting.

Improve

"It is truly wonderful to be able to take possession of these buildings and brings us ever closer to realising the council's commitment to improve the health and wellbeing of residents by getting more people, more active, more often." Oak Park is also able to offer two glass backed squash courts, sauna and a steam room.

The full size, floodlit artificial grass pitch at Oak Park will be replaced over the autumn.

Funded through the council's £24.3 million Active Living Centres initiative, the project received a £2m grant from Sport England's facilities award scheme to support Walsall Council.

Saddlers on target for fitness with open day

AUTOGRAPHS were signed, pictures were taken and children got to meet their favourite players as Walsall held their annual open day.

Hundreds of supporters packed into the Banks's Stadium to watch the Saddlers being put through their paces ahead of the new League One season which got under way on Saturday.

As well as seeing the players on the hallowed Banks's turf, fans also got to chat to their idols and see them work out in the gym.

Manager Jon Whitney together with coaches Dean Holden and Neil Cutler also posed for pictures and happily discussed the forthcoming campaign with supporters young and old. "It's great to have events like this and get out and meet the fans," Whitney said.

Atmosphere

"I wanted them to have the best day possible and really understand what we are about. I wanted to change it a bit this year and give it a bit more of an American feel.

"The season will be the same as well because I want to try and raise the atmosphere.

"But I know to do that we have to play at a nice, high tempo and win football matches so the fans enjoy it."

One of the Walsall players taking part was James O'Connor who is now in his third season with the Saddlers. And the defender admitted the open day is always an occasion he looks forward to. He said: "The open days are great for club. We are close with the community and it's great to see the kids come in and chat to fans.

"If you can inspire one or two to go on and support the club or maybe even play for the club one day – that's what it's all about. It helps bring everyone together."

Supporter Simon Cox, from Bentley, attended the event with his partner Jessica Russon and children Jasmine, aged seven, and Layla,five-months.

He said: "We all had a fantastic day. It was great to show the children what the players get up to do on a daily basis and how much work everybody at the club does in terms of training.

"It was also great to see Jeff Bonser (chairman) there and we also got a first glimpse of the signing Andreas Makris."

Thumbs-up for the Saddlers

Team captain, Adam Chambers in action

Hunting autographs, Ellison Keepins

Jon Whitney talks to gathered fans

● Clinical – back page

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Crews swing to rescue of teenager

A 14-year-old girl stuck in a child's swing, and who had to be rescued by firefighters

FIREFIGHTERS saw the funny side when they responded to a 999 call to find a teenager stuck in a baby swing.

The 14-year-old had been out with friends at King George V playing fields in Bloxwich, when she decided to have a go on the play equipment.

But she was left red-faced when she found herself stuck for 30 minutes after getting wedged in the seat.

Her pals, unable to help, were forced to call 999. A crew from Wolverhampton Fire Station rushed to rescue the embarrassed girl, who was 'extremely apologetic'. Firefighters used a specialist saw to cut her loose. The fire crew tweeted: "Crews released girl trapped in child's swing. Safety advice given, advised to stick to see-saw and roundabout. She was very remorseful with exceptional manners."

Last year firefighters had to rescue a 14-year-old girl who got stuck in a swing at Victoria Park, Darlaston, and a crew freed another girl from a swing in Ryders Hayes Park. A spokesman said: "Whilst we see the humorous side to these incidents, they do take up valuable fire fighter time which could be better used helping to reduce the risk of fire."

400 fines over school absences in borough

MORE than 400 fines have been handed to Walsall parents for failing to send their children to school in the past three months, it can be revealed.

A total of 119 were handed out last month, on top of 132 in June and 198 in May – adding up to 449 fines.

The figure represents a more than 100 per cent increase on the same period two years ago, when 216 were issued, but they are down slightly on last year.

The 2014 figures included 104 in July, 83 in June and 29 in May, according to a Freedom of Information request to the borough council. In the same same period last year, 516 fines were issued. This included 333 handed out in July.

The fine is a fixed penalty of £60 if paid within 28 days. It rises to £120 if paid after the 28-day deadline but before 42 days. If it is not paid in this time, the council will prosecute or withdraw its notice. The fines were issued to parents not ensuring children are sent to school and those who take children out of school for unauthorised absence.

Report by Jack Averty

Walsall Council has said that it sets guidelines in line with the Department for Education's 90 per cent attendance in schools target, and has warned parents that if children do not meet the target fines and even the possibility of a court case will follow.

Councillor Rose Burley, the portfolio holder for children's services and education said: "Fixed penalty notices are served for unauthorised school absences in all local authorities.

"The majority of parents understand that school absences are only granted in exceptional circumstances and the Department for Education (DfE) sets a national requirement of 90 per cent attendance in all local authority schools."

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Generous shoppers help banks

SHOPPERS in Birmingham have demonstrated their generosity by donating an estimated 37,180 meals to a food bank charity.

Birmingham has been named among the top 10 most generous towns and cities during Tesco's Summer Neighbourhood Food Collection, which has supported the Trussell Trust and food redistribution charity, FareShare.

The bi-annual food collection runs in all Tesco stores across the country, to collect essential cupboard foods such as rice, tea, tinned meat, for people in need.

Food collected in stores helped contribute towards an estimated 2.8 million meals for charities.

Tesco's Caroline Silke said: "We're over the moon with the huge number of food donations we've had in the stores, resulting in such an amazing number of meals to give to those in need. It really demonstrates the generosity of the people of Birmingham."

Bulldozers clearing the way for £12m shops and leisure complex

THE development of a £12 million shopping and leisure complex in Walsall is well under way with the demolition work drawing to a close.

Shop units at Market Square in the St Matthew's Quarter have been bulldozed ready for the site to be transformed with the development of 11 new units for retail and leisure use.

Big name retailers Poundland and B&M have already signed up, with the former taking a 8,900 square feet unit on a 10-year lease.

Demolition workers seen on site

The New Art Gallery on the horizon as work continues

One of the areas being developed at St Matthews

Welcome

Demolition of the buildings at the rear of the complex in Lower Hall Lane began in February this year.

Councillor Aftab Nawaz said: "As a councillor for the St Matthew's ward I really welcome this, it is more progress to the vision we have of a real vibrant town centre.

"St Matthew's Quarter is a prime spot for shoppers from Walsall and outside the borough. It is also good for local people as it means they will be able to apply for jobs there making our economy stronger.

"I will champion the development and ask people to come to St Matthew's and make the most of the town centre."

The work is the second part of a multi-million pound investment in the St Matthew's Quarter.

Phase one included building the largest town centre Asda superstore in the UK as well as a 1,000 car park which opened in 2007.

Council bosses have touted the project as a 'major demonstration of confidence' in Walsall as a modern day retail location.

The scheme is being led by Norton and Proffitt Developments – a joint venture between St Modwen and Goold Estates Ltd. The retail and leisure development is part of Norton & Proffitt's wider £90m regeneration of St Matthew's Quarter and will create 90,000 sq ft of new retail and leisure amenities in the town.

It is expected to finish in 2017.

Gregg Titley, development surveyor at St Modwen, said: "The Quarter represents an exciting new retail proposition for Walsall, in an area which is currently undergoing significant regeneration works.

"With planning secured for up to 11 new stores across 55,000 sq ft of space, this vibrant new quarter will enhance Walsall's retail offering and become a destination which the people of Walsall and visitors to the town centre can enjoy."

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Nine food outlets given 'zero' rating

NEARLY a fifth of all Walsall food stores have been told to make hygiene improvements by environmental health inspectors – while nine have been given the lowest possible rating.

Officers visit businesses to check how hygienically food is handled, how suitable their buildings and facilities are and how the business manages and records to make sure food is safe. Each inspection is given a standard from 'zero' to 'five'– from 'urgent improvement necessary' up to 'very good'. Of Walsall's 1,608 outlets, nine were given a 'zero' rating, 152 were rated at 'one' and a further 101 at 'two'.

Dera, in Caldmore Road, was among those given a 'zero' rating. according to the Food Standards Agency website.

Ahmed Nawaz, who has owned Dera for five years, said: "There were a lot of good things but they obviously don't look at the good – they look at the things that are not good enough."

Others were: J T F Wholesale Ltd on Bescot Retail Park; Bucuresti Mini Market on Caldmore Green; Caldmore Hall on Caldmore Road; Chicken.com on Stafford Street; Crown Grill & Fish Bar also on Stafford Street; East End Tandoori and Balti on Hawes Close; Kobani on West Bromwich Street and New Kebab Ranch on Bradford Street.

Some 309 were given 'three' ratings, 393 a 'four' and 653 a 'five', including the Stan Ball Centre, Willenhall.

Firm engineers £3m nuclear plants deal

AN Aldridge-based engineering firm has won a £3.5 million deal to provide vital components for EDF Energy's nuclear power stations in the UK.

Maloney Metalcraft, part of the Avingtrans group, will be helping extend the life of power stations the company first worked on back in the 1970s.

The need to keep the UK's ageing estate of nuclear power stations operating has become more urgent after recent delays to the proposed new reactor at Hinkley Point.

Part of Avingtran's Energy & Medical division, Maloney Metalcraft will supply gas-cooling valves for each of the seven EDF managed advanced gas-cooled reactors around the country – Dungeness B, Hinkley Point B, Hunterson B, Hartlepool, Heysham 1, Heysham 2 and Torness.

Reactors

The business currently employs 30 design engineers, sales and administrative staff at its Westage site in Aldridge.

The contract is part of a programme to extend the life of the reactors that will also see Maloney Metalcraft providing engineering support and on-site services to EDF Energy as part of the deal. These contracts will continue until the end of the operational life of the stations.

Austen Adams, managing director of Avingtrans Energy & Medical Division, said: "The contract win is good news for the business and recognises the expertise we've developed in what is truly a performance-critical sector."

Steve McQuillan, chief executive officer of Avingtrans, added: "The board is delighted that Maloney Metalcraft has secured another important contract in the nuclear sector."

Dungeness B power station, one of the seven to be supplied by Maloney Metalcraft

Crew sent to tackle car fire

FIREFIGHTERS were called after arsonists torched a car near people's homes. Crews received a 999 call at around 6.30am last Wednesday to reports of a car on fire behind flats in Green Lane, Walsall.

A crew from Walsall Fire Station were sent to tackle the blaze and were quickly able to extinguish the flames.

The car was entirely destroyed and a nearby vehicle also suffered minor heat damage. Nobody was hurt as a result of the fire but West Midlands Fire Service warned that there was potential for exploding tyres and air bags posing an additional risk.

Spokesman Matthew Smith, said: "We received a 999 call, at 6.30am to an incident at Green Lane, Walsall. One crew attended from Walsall, a total of five firefighters.

"The vehicle had been 100 per cent destroyed by the fire and a neighbouring vehicle also had minor heat damage. The fire is believed to have been started deliberately."

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Dry cleaners found guilty of terror funding plot

TWO dry cleaners and a friend have been found guilty of funding their ISIS terrorist brother by selling his BMW and wife's wedding gold.

A jury at the Old Bailey in London last week convicted All Season launderette owners Mohammed Iqbal Hussain and Mohamed Suyaubur Rohaman of sending £10,000 to their brother Musadikur Rohaman and his wife Zohurs Siddeka who had fled to Syria to join the fundamentalists.

Also found guilty was Mohammed Atiqur Rahman Khan who took out credit cards in the jihadist's name.

Hussain, aged 26, of Castle Road, Walsall Wood, was found guilty of five counts of funding terrorism. Rohaman, 32, of the same address, was convicted of a single charge, while Khan, 27, of Buckle Close, Caldmore, was found guilty of two counts.

Maruf Uddin, 26, of Earl Street Palfrey, was cleared of one charge of trying to sell Musadikur's possessions on eBay to raise funds for his terrorism.

Mohammed Iqbal Hussain

Mohammed Atiqur Khan

Mohamed Suyauber Rohaman

Maruf Uddin

Messages

The court was told how Musadikur and Siddeka, both then aged 27, failed to return from a city break to Istanbul in December 2014 following the death of their baby, a few months earlier.

They set up life in Raqqa and had another baby son. Mobile phone messages on WhatsApp between Musadikur and his family confirmed he would not be coming back home.

Wolverhampton University law graduate Hussain, the youngest of eight siblings, ran the family's All Season launderette and dry cleaning business on Caldmore Road, Caldmore. He had frequent exchanges with Musadikur using encrypted messaging apps on his phone. He sold his brother's BMW for £4,000, collected his sister-in-law's maternity pay for the deceased baby.

Later he sold £1,200 worth of his sister-in-law's gold. Hussain got his older brother, Suyaubur Rohaman, to transfer £10,000 in cash from the sale of the BMW and accumulation of the maternity pay to six different Syrian accounts in the Lebanon over two days in March last year via the Western Union facility at Imran Video shop two doors down from the launderette.

The brothers also enlisted the help of Khan who was a friend of Musadikur. The three men will be sentenced on September 9.

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Concert performed at group's AGM

Walsall U3A members perform during their ninth Annual General Meeting at St Martin's Church Hall

THE Walsall branch of the University of the Third Age (U3A) gave a concert at its ninth AGM organised by outgoing chairman Sandra Malone.

Members performed at St Martin's Church Hall, Walsall, including pianist Kath Blackburn, who also accompanied soloist Carol Beckworth and Antonio Longhi while Mario Castello accompanied joined Alan Crunden to sing a duet.

Poems were recited by John Lester and Marilyn Wilkes. The recorder group entertained with three varied pieces of music whilst the German group put their skill to the test by singing She Loves You and Yellow Submarine.The concert was brought to an end by Paul Downton who gave a rendition of Miss You Nights and My Way.

The group, which has more than 400 members and 34 interest groups, meets on the first Thursday of the month at 2pm at St. Martin's Church, Sutton Road, Walsall.

For further information visit the website u3asites.org.uk/walsall or telephone 07875 129158.

Ruling favours developer

WALSALL Council has failed in its bid to stop a former doctors' surgery being used as a house of multiple occupation for 12 people.

Concerns had been raised over anti-social behaviour. But, an appeal case involving the former surgery at 250 Stroud Avenue, Willenhall, has been won by the developer.

The building was believed to have been vacant for around 10 years. But planning enforcement officers discovered in 2014 it had been turned into an eight-bedroomed house, with a communal living room, two kitchens and a shared bathroom.

An application was then lodged to turn it into a house for 12 people. Following objections from the police this was withdrawn.

A fresh application was put in by Jim Haliburton, owner of J9 Accommodation, which was then turned down by the council, with the developer then taking the case to the Planning Inspectorate. It has now been deemed that the site is suitable for use.

Councillor Ian Shires, who represents Willenhall North, said: "It is worrying that this has been deemed acceptable because it sets a precedent and we could see many more of these popping up."

One condition that the planning inspectorate has placed on J9 is that the boundary to the site must be changed in order to make it more presentable.

Mr Haliburton said: "I am glad that common sense has won."

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Percy Stallard, pioneer racer at Brooklands

Viking Cycles ran a very successful racing team. This show team members in 1951

Bob Thom led the Viking Cycles team. Here he is in a road race

Peter and Harry Stant on Wearwell and Viking cycles at the Heritage Centre

Hugh Porter, winner of four world pursuit titles

Town ahead of the field for producing bicycles

MEMORY LANE

By Alec Brew

WOLVERHAMPTON used to be the most important town for bicycle manufacturing in the country.

At the end of the 19th century there were 30 cycle manufacturers in the town and only five in Nottingham. A total of over 80 have been identified in Wolverhampton over the years.

These range from major makers like Sunbeam, Star, Wearwell and Viking to small back street workshops.

The skill-base of the town was always literally metal bashing, tinplate manufacture, and this translated easily to making bicycles when the craze for them spread across the country in the late 19th century. The 'Rolls-Royce' of makers was Sunbeam, operating from the huge Sunbeamland works on Penn Road, with their gold pinstriping, and the chain enclosed in a 'little oil bath'.

The mighty Villiers Company was started just to make cycle parts for Sunbeam, initially pedal blocks. Many manufacturers moved on to making motorbikes, often, initially, by attaching a small engine to a bicycle frame, like Wearwell making Wolf motorbikes.

Cycle racing was hugely popular in the town, with crowds of thousands flocking to the Molineux to watch the races, before the football team took over the site. One of the most influential racers in Britain was Percy Stallard who was born in his father's cycle shop in Broad Street, and pioneered mass start road races, like the Tour de France, when the national authorities only licensed time trials.

After the war Viking Cycles ran a very successful racing team led by Bob Thom, and the town's main cycling club Wolverhampton Wheelers produced great champions like Hugh Porter and Andy Tennant.

The cycle makers have all gone now, but the Tettenhall Transport Heritage Centre feature the city's bike heritage with examples of Sunbeam, Wearwell and Viking bicycles on display, and are always looking for other examples.

Most famous Sunbeam bicycle devotee, Edward Elgar

Andy Tennant, one of the current top British cyclists

One Manor newborn a month has addiction

MORE than one baby a month on average is born at Walsall Manor Hospital with an alcohol or drug addiction, new figures reveal.

A Freedom of Information request has revealed that 14 babies in 2015/16 were born with neonatal abstinence syndrome – a withdrawal syndrome of infants who develop a 'substance addiction' in the womb due to drug-using mothers.

A total of 84 babies have been born at the Manor with the syndrome since 2011. Some 23 were born with the syndrome in 2011/12, 19 in 2012/13, nine in 2013/14 and 19 in 2014/15.

Walsall Manor Hospital's antenatal team refer pregnant women with a history of drug abuse, or who have been involved in drug abuse, to a pregnancy drug worker at The Beacon Project, part of the Change, Grow, Live charity.

The charity says that if a mother is addicted to a substance during pregnancy then the baby also becomes addicted in the womb.

Common

When the baby is born it gets withdrawal symptoms as it is no longer getting its fix through the mother – which is also known as neonatal abstinence syndrome.

Common treatment when a pregnant mother is addicted is for the mother to either go for a detox or they are given a substitute substance. Although this can still lead to the baby becoming addicted and getting withdrawal symptoms, the charity says it is much easier to treat.

Dr Catherine Muyeba, lead consultant psychiatrist for the charity, said: "The babies develop a substance addiction in the womb. If the mother was drinking every day, for example, and was addicted and the baby is getting it from the mother then it goes into withdrawal when it is cut off.

"Alcohol is the most common addiction and then heroin. But really we take each addiction on an individual basis and work out the best treatment plan.

"The important message is that the help is there."

Walsall North MP David Winnick said: "The figures are alarming. Even one baby born with an addiction is too much."

Van driver freed after crash

Bloxwich Fire tweeted these pictures of the wreckage of the vehicles

A BOY was flung from a van as it collided with another car and rolled on to its roof on a 30mph road.

The youngster suffered cuts and was said to be in a confused state following the incident on Broad Lane, Shelfield at around 9pm on Saturday. A man sustained multiple injuries and had to be cut free from the van which had collided with a parked red car. West Midlands Fire Service confirmed their injuries were not life-threatening. The van doors were visibly crumpled while glass and debris showered the road.

The car was badly damaged sustaining a large dent to the rear driver's side corner while the boot door had come away from the body.

Two fire crews attended, one from Bloxwich and another from Aldridge.

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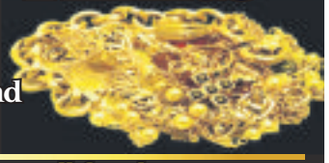

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Iris marks her milestone 100th birthday

Iris Kirkham celebrates her 100th birthday with son Malcolm and daughter Veronica at Woodlands Quaker Home

'EVERYTHING in moderation' is the secret to long life, according to the daughter of Iris Kirkham who turned 100 last week.

Iris, who was born in 1916, turned 100 on July 28. Celebrating, surrounded by her friends and family at the Woodlands Quaker Home, Penn Road, Wolverhampton, where she has lived since August last year, Iris was over the moon.

The centenarian was married to William Cooper Kirkham on the day war broke out on September 3,1939, walking down the aisle at St Matthew's Church, Walsall, only an hour after the declaration by the then Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain.

Daughter Veronica Cotterell, aged 74, who lives in Wolverhampton, said: "The guests had tried to keep the news from my mother, but she said that she knew what had happened because the congregation burst into tears as she was walking down the aisle."

William was in the Auxiliary Fire Service when war broke out and later volunteered in the RAF. Iris worked at Marks & Spencer during the war, and once she had children, became a full-time housewife.

"That was typical of her generation," Mrs Cotterell added. "She loved her home and especially her garden, she's always been a keen gardener."

Iris andWilliam had two children, Veronica and Malcolm, aged 73.

Iris now has a total of five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. "She's still a very big part of our family," Mrs Cotterell said.

"She's always smiling, never moans.

"She's never smoked, only had a glass of sherry and wine occasionally. She's always done everything in moderation – I guess that must be her secret."

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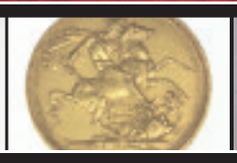

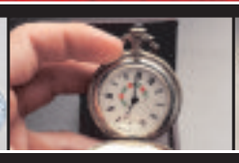

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It's just tree-mendous fun to monkey around

QUESTION. Where would you find Mallards Ladder, Bosun's Chair and Grandpop's Crossing? Give up? Then don't even bother attempting them.

They are among the stations, disciplines, call them what you will at Go Ape!'s treetop adventure at Cannock Chase.

One of 31 such locations around the country, Go Ape! has attracted thousands of visitors since setting up at Birches Valley some eight years ago.

Popular with stag parties, corporate bookings and, most of all families, the site is also set to launch its dual crossings, meaning each one of its five stations – all of which end in a zip wire – will have an alternative route. Twice the fun, but double the fear factor.

Manager Stacey Palmer said children's 10th birthdays were also popular as it marked the coming of age for trying out the obstacles.

Certificate

Babboons, that's the youngsters, and gorillas – the adults – are given an important safety lessons before being let loose on the Tarzan swings, rickety ladders and exhilarating zip wires. A certificate awaits on completion at the end of the three-hour experience.

Instructor Rich Grange is clearly a man who loves the job he has held for two years.

"It's something I thoroughly enjoy," he said. "I love to see people getting up in the trees. It's a great place to be."

Experiencing the course was Jay Vaughan, of Bloxwich, with his 13-year-old daughter Olivia and her friend Izzy Wynn.

For the latter, the aerial experience was a 15th birthday gift, while Jay was treated to a 50th birthday Segway treat immediately afterwards.

Jay Vaughan, Izzy Wynn, Olivia Vaughan

Staff Alex, Molly, Stacey and Nicole

Go Ape! Instructor Rich Grange

Don't look down. The Go Ape! course

Izzy said: "I thought I would be really scared, but once I was up there it was really good."

Jay is scared of heights, but this was not the first time he had tried the treetop adventure. "It's quite an experience," he said.

Prices are £33 for gorillas and £25 for babboons, aged 10-15. A smaller course, for Juniors Tarzans, aged six-to-12, is £18, while Segways, for 10-year-olds plus, cost £35. Call 0333 355 7904. Go Ape! has more Air Space on offer, courtesy of the new trampoline centre in Wolverhampton. Call 0845 094 1888.

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Suction solution

Struggling with unstable dentures and looking for a possible solution that does not involve surgery or fixatives? Denture Clinic Principal Steven Burchell Dip CDT RCS(Eng) GDC 108353, who heads the team at his multi-disciplined practice in Dudley, takes a look at the increasingly popular Ultra Suction Dentures solution.

Denture Clinic Principal Steven Burchell with dental nurse Lydia Tranter

THERE are around 11 million denture wearers in the UK and it's not just the elderly who require them.

Surprisingly, nearly a million people aged 16 to 44 have false teeth.

There will be many different reasons for adult tooth loss – the most prevailing being dental disease – but wearers will all likely have at some stage another common problem: Stabilisation – particularly lower dentures that randomly move about and are hugely unpredictable.

If not addressed, displacement becomes progressively worse and as the denture rises from the gum, food particles are trapped beneath and sore spots quickly develop.

Secure

Despite bucketfuls of fixative, in the words of one patient, "the dentures appear to take on a life of their own" and sufferers can't eat what they want, when they want.

It's an all-too-familiar, daily story in any clinic.

Particularly for those without any teeth, gum profiles change through the passing of time and so does the denture fit as initial harmonious matches between gums and prosthetics are slowly compromised with bone and gum erosion.

Lifting, twisting and general movement of dentures is a sure indicator that a new prescription is required. False teeth are one of the most hard-working parts of the body, so it's vital the dentures have an exacting fit and are not prone to move.

What every denture wearer seeks are secure, comfortable teeth that don't embarrass while laughing, eating, talking and coughing – dentures that allow them to live spontaneously and enhance looks.

The dentists' favoured choice for stabilisation correction is implants. But not everyone is a suitable candidate and neither are they a first preference of all patients.

Enter the non-invasive Ultra Suction Dentures solution that hit the UK market from New Zealand some four years ago.

Again not suitable for everyone, but for those with the right kind of gum contours, a great option to add another level of 'stickability'.

Secure, comfortable and natural-looking, Ultra Suction Solution dentures attract the biggest number of inquiries at the Denture Clinic.

So how do they work? A small diaphragm seals off a one-way valve under bite pressure, creating a 'sucking' vacuum between the denture and gums. The result is a better fit to the soft tissues and improved resistance to any dislodging forces created by eating and speaking. The device can be mounted in upper or lower dentures.

Everyone with a denture should feel relaxed wearing them – there is absolutely no need to put up with ill-fitting and poorly functioning prosthetics that erode self-esteem and confidence. What's more, all dentures should look stunning.

The term 'facelift dentures' is banded around and it's spurious. Dentures can, however, replace the natural supporting structures of faces and pinched lips and sunken cheeks are able to take on a new, younger looking profile.

A tighter fit for dentures and no fixative?

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Chance to see what is in store

As the Mander Centre revamp takes shape ROB COX meets man with big plans for future

Commercial retail manager Robert Gough

New escalators have been fitted in the Mander Centre

WOLVERHAMPTON'S premier city centre shopping centre is evolving before shoppers' eyes as work on the £35 million revamp steams ahead.

Many structural changes at the Mander Centre are already in use, including new escalators, and it is near impossible to walk through without hearing the sounds of builders at work.

Walls are being knocked through to create bigger units which it is hoped will attract the world's biggest retailers. And in the most striking change of all the former TJ Hughes building in Bell Street has been pulled to the ground to make way for a flagship 90,000 sq ft Debenhams.

These are exciting times for Commercial Retail Manager Robert Gough who took up the post just before Christmas.

He has outlined what has been achieved so far and how work will progress in the coming months.

"To get the retailers that customers have told us they want in Wolverhampton and to keep customers here we had to produce stores which were big enough in size and attractive enough to national and international brands," he said.

"That meant converting some existing units, knocking some together, and a lot of work has been done in the last six months which has been structural.

"What they have had to do as well is to re-shape the whole of the atrium and allow customers to flow around the centre in a different way.

Wide walkway with view of work going on

Aspiration

"The aspiration has always been to open up the centre to allow people to see from one side to the other and to see Debenhams and when it is in and when it is open.

"To do that it meant we had to remove the existing escalators, the central lifts, and that has been a big job - but you can't just take them away and not have anything to replace them.

"So before we could remove them we had to start a programme of building a new lift housing and instigating new escalators to be built and placed."

Mr Gough, who spent 14 years working with Debenhams, said the next stage of work will see the revamped centre rapidly take shape.

He said: "Over the next six to 12 months what you will see is units becoming occupied and the completion of parts of the mall actually happening.

"A lot of the finishing touches will not come until 2017 but what is great is that customers have given us really good feedback about how the centre is evolving and they are seeing a different looking Mander Centre.

"I have been pleasantly surprised how quickly customers have adapted to the new lifts, to the escalators, and are finding their way around the centre."

Ongoing work, at the Mander Centre, is being revealed

Once completed the flagship Debenhams store will spread across four floors and will be just a fraction smaller than their store at Merry Hill.

The centre's chief believes it will provide city shoppers with a wider range of goods than ever before and be a modern department store unrivalled in the West Midlands.

He added: "We have now completed the demolition of the old TJ Hughes and are at the rebuild phase which will be really exciting to see.

In addition to Debenhams the revamp is creating 10 larger units for the biggest retailers.

In July fashion giant H&M confirmed it will be moving into the Mander Centre and Mr Gough said discussions are on-going with several other brands.

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If you know someone who you think deserves to be considered for an award, simply complete the form opposite. For more information on each category visit the website. If you're not sure which one they fit into, don't worry the judges will decide. Nominees should live or work in the Black Country or south Staffordshire, i.e. within the circulation area of the Express & Star.

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A panel of judges will decide who goes through to the next round. The finalists, with a write-up about each of them, will appear in the Express & Star and online. Readers can then vote for the person in each category who they think deserves to win by cutting out special tokens printed in the paper which will appear from October 6 until November 5. The winner in each category will be the person with the most votes.

The chosen finalists, along with selected guests, will be invited to an awards event being held at Wolverhampton Wanderers Football Club on Thursday, January 19, 2017, when the winners will be announced.

Send your submission to:

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Closing date for entries is midnight Sunday, August 21 2016. Proposers must be aged 18 or over. All nominees' contact information must be on the official entry form and signed by the proposer (except online). You should tell your nominee that you are putting their name forward. If the nominee is under 16 years old, this form should be signed by their parent/guardian – if nominating online there will be a tick box to confirm you have informed the parent/guardian. All MNA employees and their immediate families are excluded. Sponsors and their immediate families may not enter their own category. Nominees should be living or working in the Black Country or south Staffordshire. If making more than one nomination, please use separate forms. All proposers and nominees must be prepared to take part in any relevant publicity, including photographic coverage, in print and online. Information (excluding contact details) on the person you are nominating will be used in-paper and online. The winner of each category will receive a special prize and there is no cash alternative. If there is a voting tie in any category, a judging panel will choose the outright winner. The Editor's decision is final.

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(e.g family, neighbour, helper in a crisis etc)
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- ☐ Teacher of the Year
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- ☐ Angel of the Year
- ☐ Grandparent(s) of the Year
- ☐ Neighbour of the Year
- ☐ Unsung Sporting Hero
- ☐ Young Star of the Year

Tell us in no more than 100 words why you think the person you are nominating deserves to win (alternatively, write your comments on a blank piece of A4 paper)
_____

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Pete performs

Williams ready to wow – **P21**

Gabrielle rises
See Page 21

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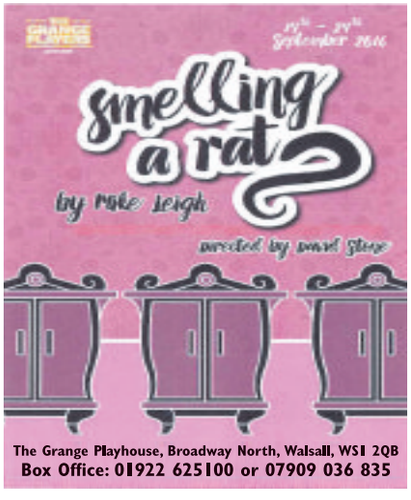

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An Express & Star supplement
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Dirty dancers having the time of their lives

Lewis Griffiths and Katie Hartland getting into shape with the rest of the cast at rehearsals for the Dirty Dancing production at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre

It's one of the biggest shows of the year.

Dirty Dancing – The Classic Story On Stage will head to Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre in November.

Since its Australian debut in 2004, it has become a worldwide phenomenon with productions staged in New Zealand, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, South Africa, Hong Kong, Singapore and throughout Europe, consistently breaking box office records.

Now a new production is making its way to the UK with performances at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Monday, November 28 to Saturday, December 3, 2016.

We caught up with five cast members to find out about the blockbuster show.

Lewis Griffiths (Johnny Castle), Katie Hartland (Baby), Carlie Milner (Penny), Federico Bellone (director) and Gillian Bruce (choreographer) talked us through the show.

How do you go about turning Dirty Dancing into a stage version?

Gillian Bruce: There is a huge pressure! Everybody knows Dirty Dancing and what I've had to do is look at the ingredients of the movie and adapt it, in terms of styling, so that it works for the stage. Personally, I was very careful when it came to picking the cast. The look had to be right and the sexiness had to be right. I've actually pushed this to be a little more 'dirty' than I think previous versions have been. I've taken that step further, without becoming vulgar! Choreographing the show is very difficult because it's all couple-work. At times the audience could find it difficult to know where to look as there's so much going on! I've tried hard to bring focus to the numbers and make the routines so that the audience can enjoy the entire thing and not be forced into having to pick what to look at.

This is an entirely new production – a different design with new direction and choreography. How does it differ to previous stage versions?

Federico Bellone: We have a brand new set. We took a photo of the resort that was used in the movie and theatricalised it. The new design makes the show easier to fit into a variety of different theatres around the country and it will look great on any stage, big or small, it will work! I think it's better than ever before – we have three revolves on stage, spinning platforms, it will be quite spectacular. The design is much more intricate than before too. In terms of direction, we've picked up the pace. We don't rush through the show but it's very slick.

Carlie Milner: I was in the previous production and loved it but it's also nice to have a fresh take on things. The director gives you all the information and you absorb it all as a cast and it is fun to create a new vision. I've found things that I'd never thought of to do before, and with the extra visual elements of this particular set I think it's going to be a stunning production.

The stars stepping out at rehearsal

Lewis, what is it like stepping into Patrick Swayze's shoes?

Lewis Griffiths: Patrick Swayze's shoes are big ones to fill, I do feel that I'm in the shadow of Patrick Swayze and rightly so, I think anyone who does this role would be. He made Johnny completely his own and I'm not trying to be Patrick Swayze. What you have to do is take the essence of what he bought to the film and make that applicable to your own abilities on stage.

What has been the most exciting part of rehearsing Dirty Dancing?

Katie Hartland: I think for me what has been most exciting is taking the iconic film and recreating it, making it our own. It's inspiring to work with such a great team because I don't feel that I have half the dance experience that some of the cast have. Working alongside them has been great for me, developing technique with all the different dance styles in the show.

Lewis Griffiths: For me, the casting process was quite unbelievable – to think that I got through the rounds and landed the role of Johnny I felt like I was at the bottom of a very large mountain with an incredibly tough climb ahead of me. Already, with the support of a great cast and creative team I'm halfway up there and when we all get to the top we're going to have one hell of a show! I'm honoured to be a part of it.

Dirty Dancing sits happily in the middle of Musical Theatre and Drama – it isn't necessarily one or the other. How do you approach it?

Federico Bellone: It's very difficult because everyone who comes to see Dirty Dancing probably expects a musical, and a lot of people have said 'aren't Johnny and Baby supposed to sing?' I'll be honest and say that I originally thought the same when I saw the show in the West End in 2007. Then I met Eleanor Bergstein, the author, and she told me many reasons for why they shouldn't and we have to accept that she was perfectly right! I suppose it is a play, but there are plenty of musical numbers with a live band and musicians that give it the musical feel – so it should appeal to people who like both genres. It has the pace and fun of a musical but it is a bit more like reality – they don't just burst into song, music, singing and dancing is only featured naturally as and when it would be in real life.

Is there a certain level of fitness that a Dirty Dancing cast member needs to be to keep up?

Carlie Milner: As any performer would tell you, it's part of the job to stay fit, and also when you're between jobs it's good to turn up to auditions with a certain level of fitness. Your body gets used to the show, I guess it's the same as running three miles a day – eventually your body will just get used it. It's then up to the individual performer to find their own exercise routines to maintain the energy needed to get you through the show. Cooling down properly is also really important!

What are the most challenging parts of the show?

Carlie Milner: It's a very physical show, sometimes it feels like you're constantly dancing and you have to find it from somewhere to make sure you do everything correctly. My character Penny goes through a trauma so finding the right balance between portraying that honestly and making sure the audience follow the story you're telling through the ups and the downs.

Lewis Griffiths: I consider myself an actor first and foremost, and people tell me that I can dance but I'm in my comfort zone when I'm acting. The character of Jonny is in his comfort zone when he's dancing, he's so at one in a dance studio in his Cuban heels, leading and teaching, so I have to use my strengths as an actor to make my insecurities Johnny Castle's strengths!

By Andy Richardson

Hometown date for Dexys old boy

Pete Williams, once of Dexys, is back in the Black Country

FORMER Dexys Midnight Runners bassist Pete Williams is back on home soil next week.

The Black Country-born musician, who founded Dexys with frontman Kevin Rowland, performs, with friends, at Halesowen Athletics and Cycling Club next Friday (August 19).

Imelda May said of the charismatic musician: "He tells terrific stories set to beautiful melodies and sung with passion, charisma and heartfelt honesty. He draws me in every time."

But she is not the only fan. The Reid twins, Charlie and Craig, aka The Proclaimers, personally invited Williams to support them on their 32 date 2015 UK tour.

"Pete is a storyteller in his songs," said the brothers. "We both thought See was the stand out album of 2012. The soulfulness that Pete brings to everything that he does is inspiring. He has the passion of a young writer, and the philosophical overview of a wise man."

Since then, Williams has performed on BBC Scotland's flagship music show The Quay Sessions and in April sold out Birmingham REP Studio theatre.

He now returns to one of his favourite Black Country venues to perform an intimate 'stripped back' semi-acoustic show featuring songs from both his critically acclaimed albums, 2012's See and Roughnecks and Roustabouts, which was released last year.

He will be joined in the unique setting by some very talented co-collaborators and musical friends.

Tickets are £10, available from the venue or at http://petewilliamsmusic.com/live

Gabrielle's back on road and will Rise to occasion

HAVING recently completed a sell-out tour as special guest to Michael Bolton, soul star Gabrielle is looking forward to being back on the road to perform a greatest hits set later this year.

Her tour will call at Birmingham's Town Hall on November 2 – and Gabrielle can't wait.

"I am completely looking forward to it," she says. "I did the tour with Michael and he was great. We got to the end of the tour and for the first time in 20-odd years I was depressed. I always look forward to going back home but I'd had such a blast that I wanted to get back out there.

"So the management lined up the shows for November and we announced them straight away. You know, I have a 21-year-old and a 13-year-old so most of the time I'm home alone. They have a better social life than me."

Gabrielle's tour will be stripped back, up close and personal. Fans have already taken to Twitter to tell her what to play. "The audience on Twitter have been making suggestions of songs they'd like me to sing. It'll be a bit scary when I make that final decision."

Gabrielle's career got off to an incredible start in 1993 when she broke the record for the highest chart debut by a female with the single Dreams. It went in at two, before rising to number one. She quickly became Britain's most successful soul singer with subsequent hits Give Me A Little More Time, If You Ever, When A Woman, Sunshine and Out Of Reach, which she wrote for the film Bridget Jones' Diary.

Songwriter's new single is released

WOLVERHAMPTON'S Ivor Novello-winning songwriter Scott Matthews has released a new single, The Lantern Flower, in advance of his forthcoming album, Home Pt II.

Matthews has formed his own record company this year, Shedio Records, based in Wolverhampton. Fans can order copies of his new album from www.pledgemusic.com

Matthews will release Home Pt II on September 19. The record finds him returning to the source, driven by what he describes as "a need to rekindle a relationship with the artist I was 10 years ago, but joining forces with the artist I am today."

Tribute to Queen a kind of magic

THE sounds of Freddie Mercury and co blast out in Bilston tomorrow night (Friday) with Magic – A Kind Of Queen.

The tribute act, led by Roger Brown, performs all the band's greatest hits at the Robin 2, Mount Pleasant. The two-hour show recreates all the excitement of a live Queen concert. It kicks off at 8.45pm, with tickets at £15, or £1 extra on the door.

The following night, two of the UK's finest Reggae bands unite to bring Bilston's very own Reggae Sunsplash as the venue plays host to a UB40 and Bob Marley tribute.

Tickets are £15, or £16 on the door. Call 01902 401211.

Auditions for Open Mic competition

AUDITIONS for Open Mic UK take place in the Second City on Saturday. Try-outs for the Open Mic Birmingham and the Birmingham Music Competition are being held at the NEC.

Future Music, responsible for discovering acts such as Birdy and Lucy Spraggan, are behind the contests.

They are looking for UK's best singer, duo, vocal group or rapper. The minimum age for Open Mic is 16 with auditions from 10am to 6pm and 18 for the Birmingham Music Competition, with auditions from 4.30-9pm. Go to: http://www.openmicuk.co.uk/open-mic-birmingham to enter

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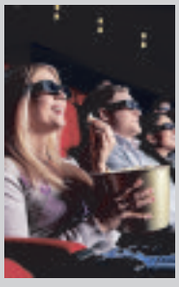

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CHOICE

Kirsty Wark

Edinburgh Nights (BBC2, 9.30pm)
New series. Kirsty Wark introduces highlights from the city's annual arts and cultural festivals, including interviews with Angus Deayton and Richard Wilson, who talk about their long associations with Edinburgh and about resurrecting much-loved characters and sketches from the past. Plus, two special commissions which commemorate the centenary of the First World War, and Ian Rankin joins Kirsty on a tour of the Scottish Endarkenment exhibition.

BBC1

6.00 Olympic Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Home Cooking Made Easy. (R) **12.00** BBC News; Weather. **12.10** Football Focus. **12.45** Olympics 2016. Hazel Irvine introduces coverage on day eight of the Olympic Games in Rio, featuring various rowing finals at the Lagoa Stadium and athletics from the Olympic Stadium. **5.00** BBC News. **5.10** Regional Programme. **5.20** Olympics 2016. Hazel Irvine presents further coverage of day eight of the Olympic Games in Rio.

7.00 Olympics 2016. Clare Balding introduces the latest coverage on day eight of the Olympic Games, with the focus solely on the Rio Olympic Velodrome for various track cycling events. The first of the men's sprint quarter-finals takes place at 20.00, with the 9th-12th classification race at 20.18. The second round of the women's keirin gets under way at 20.22, with the second of the men's sprint quarter-finals at 20.34. The women's team pursuit final then begins at 20.53, with the Team GB squad of Laura Trott, Joanna Rowsell-Shand, Elinor Barker, Katie Archibald and Ciara Horne hoping to retain their crown from London four years ago. The 7th-12th classification race in the women's keirin begins at 21.27, with the final following at 21.33, and the action is completed with the men's sprint semi-finals at 21.41 and 21.59.

10.10 BBC News; Weather.

10.30 Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights of the opening Premier League matches, including Hull City v Leicester City at KCOM Stadium, and Manchester City v Sunderland at Etihad Stadium. Champions Leicester will be aiming to start the new campaign in a similar fashion to last season, and were expected to record a victory over the newly-promoted Tigers; National Lottery Update.

11.55 Olympics 2016. Jason Mohammad presents further coverage on day eight of the Olympics, with Greg Rutherford, Jessica Ennis-Hill and Mo Farah aiming to repeat their 'Super Saturday' heroics of 2012.

4.00 Weather for the Week Ahead. **4.05** BBC News.

BBC2

6.10 Film: Two Tickets to Broadway. (1951) **7.50 Film:** The 39 Steps. (1935) **9.15** Olympics: Rio Highlights 2016. Highlights of the seventh day of the Olympics. **12.45** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.45** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **2.45** Escape to the Country. (R) **3.30** Gardeners' World. (R) **4.00** Final Score. **5.15** Full Steam Ahead. (R)

6.15 Dad's Army. (R)

6.50 Proms Extra 2016. Katie Derham presents live from the Royal Albert Hall, where she aims to warm the audience up for tonight's performance – a Gershwin Gala featuring the John Wilson Orchestra. She also revisits recent highlights from the Proms, including Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto and Holst's Planets, while David Owen Norris returns with Chord of the Week.

7.30 BBC Proms 2016. Katie Derham presents as-live from the Royal Albert Hall as conductor John Wilson and his orchestra celebrate the music of George and Ira Gershwin, the American songwriting duo created some of the most memorable songs to hit Broadway in the 20th century. Singers Julian Ovenden, Louise Dearman and Matthew Ford are on hand to accompany the John Wilson Orchestra as they perform popular Gershwin tunes such as Fascinatin' Rhythm, They All Laughed and many more, and the ensemble's musicians showcase their skill in orchestral numbers including An American in Paris, and a Rhapsody in Blue Overture.

9.30 Edinburgh Nights. New series. Kirsty Wark introduces highlights from the city's annual arts and cultural festivals, including interviews with Angus Deayton.

10.00 The National Lottery Live. Including the Lotto and Thunderball draws. Plus, a catch-up with Team GB medal-winners at the Rio Olympics. Presented by Kate Garraway.

10.10 Olympics 2016. Clare Balding presents coverage of the eighth day of competition at the Olympic Games, with men's sprint cycling and Great Britain v USA in women's hockey taking centre stage.

11.55 Versailles; (R) Inside Versailles.

12.55 Film: The Kid with a Bike. (2011)

2.20 Film: Treacle Jr. (2010) **3.35** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge. **6.25** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.55** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.00** Sooty. (R) **7.15** Super 4. (R) **7.35** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **8.00** Ninjago: Rise of the Snakes. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **10.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **11.25 Film:** Columbo: Forgotten Lady. (1975) **1.25** ITV News; Weather. **1.30** Wild Animal Reunions. (R) **2.30** Doc Martin. (R) **3.30** River Monsters. (R) **4.00 Film:** The Mummy. (1999) Fantasy action adventure.

6.15 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.30 ITV News; Weather.

6.45 You've Been Framed! Harry Hill narrates a comical selection of mishaps filmed by viewers, featuring a tiny archaeologist who digs up more than anyone bargained for, and an eating competition.

7.15 Catchphrase. Amanda Tollan, Manish Mehta and Charlotte Myers set out to prove they can "see it and say it" as Stephen Mulhern challenges them to guess the familiar phrases hidden in animated clues. After the first elimination, the two remaining players battle to reach the Super Catchphrase round, where one of them could win £50,000.

8.00 The Nation's Favourite 80s Number One. A look at the 1980s – a defining decade in both pop and fashion. Featuring interviews with Spandau Ballet, Bonnie Tyler and Madness, plus a look at the stories behind chart classics such as Don't You Want Me, Tainted Love, Billie Jean and Come On Eileen. Zoe Ball narrates. (R)

9.30 Film: The Bourne Identity. (2002) A fishing boat crew plucks a man out of the sea with two bullet wounds in his back and a safe-deposit number sewn into his skin – but absolutely no memory of who he is or how he got there. In the search for his true identity, he is pursued by assassins – but his skill at evading them suggests his own past is far from straightforward. Thriller, starring Matt Damon.

11.00 ITV News; Weather.

11.15 Film: The Bourne Identity. (2002) Concludes.

12.00 Jackpot247. **3.00** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.15 Shipping Wars. (R) **6.40** Gillette World Sport. **7.05** Armoy Road Races. **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.00** The Morning Line. **10.00** Frasier. (R) **10.30** Frasier. (R) **11.05** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.30** The Simpsons. (R) **1.00** The Simpsons. (R) **1.30** The Simpsons. (R) **2.00** Channel 4 Racing. Live coverage from Newbury, Newmarket and Ripon. **4.30** Couples Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.15** Couples Come Dine with Me. (R)

6.00 Channel 4 News.

6.20 Film: Men in Black II. (2002) Agent J investigates the unauthorised landing of a spacecraft and discovers a malevolent alien disguised as a lingerie model is on the verge of destroying humanity. His only hope of stopping her diabolical plot is to restore the memory of his retired partner K – but his former mentor takes more than a little convincing. Sci-fi comedy sequel, directed by Barry Sonnenfeld, starring Will Smith, Tommy Lee Jones, Rosario Dawson, Lara Flynn Boyle, Johnny Knoxville, Rip Torn and Tony Shalhoub.

8.00 Film: Rise of the Planet of the Apes. (2011) A scientist carries out genetic experiments on apes, hoping to find a cure for Alzheimer's disease. A chimpanzee used in the tests develops superior intelligence and becomes outraged at the human race's cruel treatment of his kind, forming his fellow primates into an army to overthrow mankind. Sci-fi thriller, starring James Franco, Freida Pinto and Andy Serkis.

10.00 Film: Gladiator. (2000) A Roman general is forced to fight as a gladiator and uses his position to seek revenge for the murder of his family. Oscar-winning epic, with Russell Crowe and Joaquin Phoenix.

12.55 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. The Greek at the Harbour restaurant in California. (R) **1.50** Hollyoaks. Omnibus. Joe finds suspicious texts on Mercedes' phone. (R) **3.55** Kirstie's Vintage Gems. (R) **4.15** Phil: Secret Agent Down Under. Ravi and Kiran Munde search for a home in Perth, Australia. (R) **5.10** Location, Location, Location. Two couples hoping to relocate to Surrey. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **8.25** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **9.00** The Saturday Show Live. **11.00** Funniest Fails, Falls & Flops. **11.25** The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R) **12.20** The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R) **1.15** The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R) **2.10** Police Interceptors. (R) **3.10** Police Interceptors. (R) **4.10** Police Interceptors. (R) **5.10** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R)

6.05 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. In East London, High Court Enforcement Agents Paul and Phil are involved in a brothel eviction, while in south Wales, Stewart and Elmore chase a debt owed by a working mum. (R)

6.55 5 News Weekend.

7.00 Cricket on 5. England v Pakistan. Mark Nicholas presents action from day three of the Fourth Test in the four-match series, which took place at The Oval. With commentary and analysis from Geoffrey Boycott, Michael Vaughan and Simon Hughes.

8.00 Criminally Funny: Caught in the Act. Zoe Lyons, Matt Richardson and Dave Spikey introduce a selection of humorous clips capturing the law being broken, including footage of a kleptomaniac cat. Narrated by Iain Lee. (R)

9.00 Football on 5: The Championship. George Riley and Lynsey Hipgrave introduce highlights from the weekend's games in the Championship, including Aston Villa v Rotherham United and Norwich City v Sheffield Wednesday.

10.00 Football on 5: Goal Rush. George Riley and Lynsey Hipgrave introduce all the goals from the weekend's games in the Leagues One and Two.

10.30 Celebrity Big Brother. Marcus Bentley narrates as the famous housemates lie in their beds, chat on the sofas and argue in the kitchen – all for the enjoyment of the viewing public.

11.30 Impractical Jokers UK. The Jokers head to a shopping centre to describe their missing wife to the public and compete to claim high-fives from complete strangers on the street. (R)

12.00 SuperCasino. **3.10** Celebrity Big Brother. (R) **4.00** GPs: Behind Closed Doors. (R) **4.50** Divine Designs. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
1.00 Olympics 2016 **2.00** Britain on Film: Country Living **2.30** Sounds of the Sixties **3.00** The Joy of Disco **4.00** Close

ITV2
11.45 Ninja Warrior UK **12.45** Catchphrase **1.35** Funniest Ever You've Been Framed! Gold **2.35 Film:** The Smurfs (2011) **3.35** FYI Daily **3.40 Film:** The Smurfs (2011) **4.40** The X Factor: Top 10 Best Auditions **5.45 Film:** The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey (2012) **6.45** FYI Daily **6.50 Film:** The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey (2012) **9.00 Film:** The Matrix Revolutions (2003) **10.00** FYI Daily **10.05 Film:** The Matrix Revolutions (2003) **11.25** Family Guy **12.55** American Dad! **1.55** The Cleveland Show **2.45** Teleshopping **5.45** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3
12.50 Film: Carry On Up the Jungle (1970) **1.55** FYI Daily **2.00 Film:** Carry On Up the Jungle (1970) **2.45** Lewis **4.45** Foyle's War **7.00** Doc Martin **8.00** Lewis **10.00** A Touch of Frost **12.05** Inspector Morse **2.10** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4
11.35 British Superbike Championship Highlights **12.35** Silverstone Classic **1.40 Film:** Captain Newman MD (1964) **2.40** FYI Daily **2.45 Film:** Captain Newman MD (1964) **4.15 Film:** Dunkirk (1958) **5.25** FYI Daily **5.30 Film:** Dunkirk (1958) **7.00** Mr Bean **8.00 Film:** Cannonball Run II (1984) **9.05** FYI Daily **9.10 Film:** Cannonball Run II (1984) **10.15 Film:** Lock Up (1989) **11.20** FYI Daily **11.25 Film:** Lock Up (1989) **12.25 Film:** 30 Days of Night (2007) **1.30** FYI Daily **1.35 Film:** 30 Days of Night (2007) **2.40** Movies Now **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
12.00 Made in Chelsea: South of France **1.00** New Girl **1.30** The Goldbergs **3.30** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **4.25 Film:** Step Up (2006) **6.35** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** X-Men Origins: Wolverine (2009) **11.05** Gogglebox **12.10** Rude Tube **1.20** First Dates **2.20** 2 Broke Girls **3.00** Gogglebox **3.55** How I Met Your Mother **4.35** The Mindy Project **5.20** Revenge

Film4
11.00 Bugsy Malone (1976) **1.00** Inspector Gadget (1999) **2.40** Judy Moody and the Not Bummer Summer (2011) **4.30** Mission: Impossible (1996) **6.40** Mission: Impossible 2 (2000) **9.00** The Sweeney (2012) **11.15** Die Hard 2 (1990) **1.35** 12 Rounds (2009) **3.50** Close

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CHOICE

Arthur Williams

Flying to the Ends of the Earth
(Channel 4, 7pm)
Arthur Williams makes a journey by air across Peru, passing through deserts, mountains and jungles. He investigates new theories concerning the origins of the Nazca lines, 2000-year-old lines etched into the desert sands that some believe were created by aliens, but may actually be a map showing the location of underground water sources. He makes a risky landing in a canyon to explore a gold mine and visits a community of floating houses designed to survive the dramatic rise and fall of the Amazon. Last in the series.

BBC1

6.00 Olympic Breakfast. **7.35** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** BBC News. **10.00** Sunday Morning Live. **11.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **12.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **12.45** BBC News; Weather. **1.00** Olympics 2016. Hazel Irvine introduces action from day nine of the Olympic Games, featuring live coverage of the women's marathon at Sambodromo and boxing highlights from Riocentro. **5.00** BBC News. **5.20** Regional Programme. **5.30** Countryfile.

6.30 Olympics 2016. Clare Balding presents the latest live coverage on day nine of the Olympic Games. The Rio Olympic Arena is the focus of attention to begin with, as three artistic gymnastics finals take place, starting with the women's vault at 18.46. The men's pommel horse final follows at 19.33, with world champion Max Whitlock and 2012 silver medallist Louis Smith representing Team GB, and the women's uneven bars final completes proceedings at 20.20. The action then moves to the Rio Olympic Velodrome for various track cycling events, starting with women's sprint time-trial qualifying at 20.00. The men's omnium scratch race follows at 20.40, with Mark Cavendish looking for the Olympic medal that has so far eluded him. The men's sprint continues with the bronze-medal and final first races at 21.04, before the women's sprint qualifying at 21.12, men's sprint bronze-medal and final second races at 21.42 and men's omnium individual pursuit at 21.50.

10.00 BBC News.

10.20 Regional Programme.

10.30 Match of the Day 2. Manish Bhasin presents action from the latest Premier League matches, which were Bournemouth v Manchester United at Vitality Stadium and Arsenal v Liverpool at Emirates Stadium.

11.25 Olympics 2016. Clare Balding presents further live coverage on day nine, focusing on track cycling at the Rio Olympic Velodrome, with the closing stages of the men's omnium elimination race.

12.00 Olympics 2016. Jason Mohammad introduces further coverage on day nine of the Games, featuring the flagship event of the athletics schedule – the men's 100m final – as well as the men's 400m final. **3.00** Weather for the Week Ahead. **3.05** BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 Gardeners' World. (R) **6.45** Countryfile. (R) **7.45** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. (R) **9.15** Olympics: Rio Highlights 2016. Action from day eight of the Games in Rio. **1.00 Film:** The Prisoner of Zenda. (1952) Adventure, starring Stewart Granger. **2.40** Flog It! (R) **3.25** Highlands: Scotland's Wild Heart. (R) **4.25** Songs of Praise. **5.00** Olympics 2016. Featuring sailing and artistic gymnastics.

6.30 Film: Megamind. (2010) An evil genius finally succeeds in killing the superhero who has foiled his every evil scheme, but finds life without an enemy boring. To fill the gap in his life, he transforms an ordinary man into a worthy adversary – but when his creation turns evil, it falls to the villain to save the world. Animated comedy, with the voices of Will Ferrell, Tina Fey and Brad Pitt.

8.00 Robot Wars. Dara O Briain and Angela Scanlon present more battles in the arena. A team of engineering students has created a robot that is able to move easily in any direction, which they send into battle against a group of holiday camp staff and a father and son duo whose machine is equipped with huge piercing claws.

9.00 Dragons' Den. Evan Davis presents the show as more entrepreneurs try to impress the panel. Peter Jones, Deborah Meaden, Touker Suleyman, Sarah Willingham and Nick Jenkins cast their eyes over an innovative tool and a portable water-saving device. However, a restaurateur struggles to get across the details of his business plan.

10.00 Olympics 2016. Clare Balding and Mark Chapman introduce the latest from day nine of the Games in Rio, including live track cycling coverage and a round-up of the day's action so far.

11.25 Film: Mister John. (2013) Premiere. A man coping with a failing marriage goes to Singapore and is tempted to make a fresh start by assuming his dead brother's identity. Drama, starring Aidan Gillen.

12.55 Sign Zone: Countryfile. Anita Rani reports from the Scottish island of Kerrera. (R) **1.50** Holby City. Bernie faces an ethical dilemma when her wayward son arrives at the hospital. (R) **2.50** This Is BBC Two. Preview of upcoming programmes from BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge. **6.25** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.55** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.00** Sooty. (R) **7.15** Super 4. (R) **7.35** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **8.00** Ninjago: Rise of the Snakes. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **10.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **11.25 Film:** Columbo: Now You See Him. (1976) **1.15** ITV News; Weather. **1.25** Long Lost Family. (R) **2.25** The Chase. (R) **3.25 Film:** Peter Pan. (2003) Fantasy adventure, with Jeremy Sumpter and Rachel Hurd-Wood. **5.30** Masterpiece with Alan Titchmarsh. (R)

6.30 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.45 ITV News; Weather.

7.00 The Zoo. Documentary following life at London Zoo and Whipsnade, focusing on the breeding of critically endangered animals. This edition follows the journey of three Sumatran tiger cubs from the moment they are born to the last time they can be safely handled by keepers and vets, and revisits Flora the pygmy hippo as she continues to receive life-saving treatment for cancer. Plus, head of birds Adrian Walls and the team finally manage to breed their first-ever Humboldt penguin chick, which is soon joined by six more babies. Narrated by Sarah Lancashire. (R)

8.00 Midsomer Murders. Forest ranger Felicity Ward is blinded by mysterious lights while driving at night in the village of Cooper Hill and the next morning her car is found abandoned at the roadside, followed closely by the discovery of her body. Visiting UFO spotters in the village are convinced aliens are responsible, but as Barnaby and Nelson try to get to the truth, they unearth suspicions, betrayals and long-buried secrets along the way. Michelle Collins, Steve Evets, Alison Steadman, Steve Oram and Pip Torrens guest star. (R)

10.00 ITV News; Weather.

10.15 Slow Train Through Africa with Griff Rhys Jones. The comedian attempts to zigzag his way 1,200 miles through Kenya and Tanzania, beginning this leg of his journey on a vintage steam locomotive designed in Glasgow. (R)

11.15 Tipping Point. (R)

12.15 Jackpot247. **3.00** Motorsport UK. **3.50** British Superbike Championship Highlights. **4.40** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.05 London Triathlon. **7.00** Motor Sport: British GT. **7.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.55** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.25** Frasier. (R) **8.55** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** The Simpsons: Bart Day. (R) **1.00** The Simpsons: Bart Day. (R) **1.30** The Simpsons: Bart Day. (R) **2.00** The Simpsons: Bart Day. (R) **2.30** The Simpsons: Bart Day. (R) **3.00** The Simpsons: Bart Day. (R) **3.30** The Simpsons: Bart Day. (R) **4.00** The Simpsons: Bart Day. (R) **4.30** Location, Location, Location. (R) **5.30** A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. (R)

6.30 Channel 4 News.

7.00 Flying to the Ends of the Earth. Arthur Williams makes a journey across Peru, passing through deserts, mountains and jungles and investigating the origin of the famous 2000-year-old Nazca lines. Last in the series.

8.00 Film: Captain America: The First Avenger. (2011) Premiere. A puny but brave volunteer is rejected for military service during the Second World War. He becomes the test subject for an experiment that transforms him into the ultimate soldier, and battles against a secret Nazi society plotting to harness the powers of a mystical artefact. Superhero adventure, with Chris Evans, Hugo Weaving, Hayley Atwell and Tommy Lee Jones. Edited for language and violence.

10.30 Film: Cuban Fury. (2014) A boy's dream of being a champion salsa dancer is shattered by bullies. Twenty years later, he returns to the dance floor as an overweight and under-confident adult, and tries to get his old footwork back in a bid to sweep his boss off her feet. Comedy, starring Nick Frost, Chris O'Dowd, Rashida Jones, Ian McShane and Olivia Colman.

12.15 Ramsay's Hotel Hell. Gordon Ramsay visits the Beachfront Inn and Inlet in Florida, whose inexperienced owner is making guests' time miserable with dusty rooms, late-night concerts and poor service. (R) **1.05** Friday Night Dinner. (R) **1.35** Walking the Himalayas. Levison Wood joins pilgrims on their way to India's holiest city. (R) **2.30** Location, Location, Location. Two couples search for homes in Hertfordshire. (R) **3.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.50** Draw It! (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Toby's Travelling Circus. (R) **6.15** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **6.30** Bob the Builder. (R) **6.40** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **6.50** Zack and Quack. (R) **7.05** Pets. (R) **7.10** Noddy in Toyland. (R) **7.20** Paw Patrol. **7.35** Little Princess. (R) **7.50** Pip Ahoy! (R) **8.10** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.35** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.50** Shimmer and Shine. **9.15** Jelly Jamm. (R) **9.30** LazyTown. (R) **9.55** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.30** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.25** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **12.00** Now That's Funny! (R) **1.00 Film:** WarGames. (1983) A teenager hacks into a top-secret military supercomputer, unwittingly pushing the world to the brink of nuclear war. Thriller, with Matthew Broderick, Ally Sheedy and John Wood. Edited for language and flashing images. **3.10 Film:** The Time Machine. (2002) Sci-fi adventure, starring Guy Pearce. **5.00 Film:** Planet of the Apes. (2001) Sci-fi adventure remake, starring Mark Wahlberg.

7.00 Cricket on 5. England v Pakistan. Mark Nicholas presents action from day four of the Fourth Test in the four-match series, which took place at The Oval. With commentary and analysis from Geoffrey Boycott, Michael Vaughan and Simon Hughes.

8.00 Monkeys Make You Laugh Out Loud. Compilation of internet videos featuring monkeys doing bizarre and humorous things.

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Celebrity Big Brother. A chance to catch up with the latest events inside the BB bungalow as the celebrities cope with living under constant surveillance, with all the arguments and alliances, as well as the revelations in the diary room.

10.00 Film: Pulp Fiction. (1994) A series of interlinked stories about the Los Angeles underworld. Quentin Tarantino's crime drama, starring John Travolta, Samuel L Jackson, Uma Thurman and Bruce Willis.

1.00 SuperCasino. Viewers get the chance to take part in live interactive gaming, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team. **3.10** Mascara Boys: Sex Me Up. Men obsessed with how they look and determined to turn themselves into the perfect specimen, either through the use of make-up or by going under the knife. (R) **4.00** House Doctor. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
1.00 Olympics 2016 **2.00** Britain on Film: End of Empire **2.30** Sounds of the Sixties **3.00** The Pendle Witch Child **4.00** Close

ITV2
11.45 The X Factor: Top 10 Best Auditions **12.45** Take Me Out **1.55 Film:** Mr Bean's Holiday (2007) **2.55** FYI Daily **3.00 Film:** Mr Bean's Holiday (2007) **3.40** The X Factor: Top 10 Worst Auditions **4.45 Film:** The Smurfs 2 (2013) **5.50** FYI Daily **5.55 Film:** The Smurfs 2 (2013) **6.55 Film:** The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug (2013) **7.55** FYI Daily **8.00 Film:** The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug (2013) **10.00** Family Guy **11.30** American Dad! **12.30** Bordertown **12.55** The Cleveland Show **1.50** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.15** Teleshopping **5.45** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3
12.20 A Touch of Frost **2.25** Wycliffe **3.40 Film:** The Railway Children (1970) **4.40** FYI Daily **4.45 Film:** The Railway Children (1970) **5.55** Doc Martin **8.00** Royal Stories **9.00** Million Dollar Princesses **10.00 Film:** Elizabeth: The Golden Age (2007) **11.00** FYI Daily **11.05 Film:** Elizabeth: The Golden Age (2007) **12.20** Wire in the Blood **3.05** May the Best House Win **4.50** Rising Damp **5.40** ITV3 Nightscreen

ITV4
11.00 Live British Touring Car Championship. Round seven from Knockhill. **6.15** BRDC Formula 3 Championship Highlights **7.15** Football Rivalries **7.30** Pawn Stars **8.00** The Chase: Celebrity Special **9.00 Film:** The Deer Hunter (1978) **10.05** FYI Daily **10.10 Film:** The Deer Hunter (1978) **12.40 Film:** Mars Attacks! (1996) **1.40** FYI Daily **1.45 Film:** Mars Attacks! (1996) **2.55** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
12.00 Coach Trip: Road to Ibiza **2.35** The Goldbergs **4.30 Film:** Journey to the Center of the Earth (2008) **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** Aliens (1986) **12.05** Tattoo Fixers on Holiday **1.10** Gogglebox **2.00** Containment **2.50** Angie Tribeca **3.10** New Girl **3.30** Hollyoaks

Film4
11.00 Porridge (1979) **1.00** Rango (2011) **3.10** The House of Magic (2013) **4.50** Mirror Mirror (2012) **6.55** The Tourist (2010) **9.00** This Is England (2006) **11.05** Savages (2012) **1.40** The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser (1974) **3.55** Close

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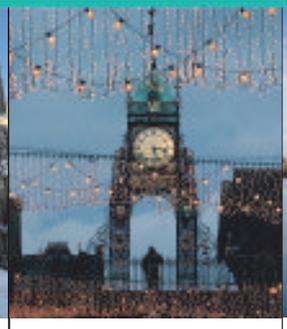

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Fri 23 to Tue 27 Dec
Your break includes
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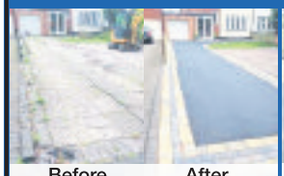

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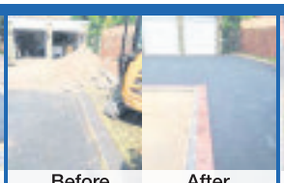

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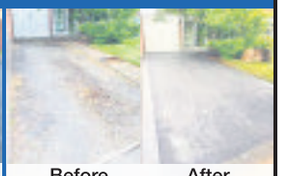

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
Millionaire Mystery: The Ultimate Gift, Channel 5, 3.10pm
A man has to complete a series of odd tasks set by billionaire grandfather in order to receive his inheritance from his billionaire grandfather, with no idea the challenges will change his life completely. Family drama, starring James Garner and Drew Fuller. (2006)

TUESDAY
Buried Secrets, Channel 5, 3.15pm
Former cop Sarah Winters publishes her first novel, and finds herself on the wrong side of the law when her book's plot seems to mirror an all-too-real murder case. Thriller, starring Sarah Carter. (2014)

WEDNESDAY
Killer Instinct: From the Files of Candice DeLong, Channel 5, 3.20pm
An FBI agent retires after 15 gruelling years to pursue a career in nursing. She is drawn back to the bureau after her best friend is raped by a man responsible for a series of murders. However, as she investigates the case, she and her son end up being stalked by the killer. Fact-based crime drama, starring Jean Smart and A Martinez. (2003)

Burke & Hare, Friday, BBC2, 11.10pm

THURSDAY
Survive the Serengeti: Against the Wild 2, Channel 5, 3.15pm
When their plane crash-lands in the African bush, two bickering siblings find themselves force to rely on their wits – and their courageous dog – to help them conquer their fears and survive. Adventure, starring Jeri Ryan, John Paul Ruttan and Ella Ballentine. (2016)

FRIDAY
Burke & Hare, BBC2, 11.10pm
Two Irishmen in 19th-century Edinburgh have to dispose of a dead lodger, and learn a doctor pays well for cadavers to use in his anatomy lectures. Seeing a chance to get rich, they soon progress from grave robbing to murder in a bid to keep their benefactor in fresh corpses. Comedy horror, starring Simon Pegg, Andy Serkis and Jessica Hynes. (2010)

Famous faces put their knowledge to the test

In 2004, Channel 4 brought together a number of British celebs for the first ever Big Fat Quiz. The show featured comic Jimmy Carr as host and three teams made of two panelists each.

Carr asked the teams questions pertaining to events that had happened that past year.

The show was a massive success, which ensured that it would soon be a yearly thing.

Over the years, though, the programme has reached levels of both legend and infamy.

In 2006, during his heyday as the enfant terrible of British comedy, Russell Brand teamed up with The Mighty Boosh's Noel Fielding.

The two oddballs called themselves The Goth Detectives and began the tradition of purposely writing surreal and ridiculous answers in an effort to amuse the audience as opposed to trying to win the game.

This even led to the pair eventually performing a Goth Detectives-themed show for the Teenage Cancer Trust event at the Royal Albert Hall in 2007.

This tongue-in-cheek spirit has continued throughout the years and not only led to funny moments, but also a bit of controversy.

Back in 2012, James Corden made headlines when he and his League of Their Own pal Jack Whitehall got slightly inebriated on the programme, and even had pizza delivered, washing it down it with red wine.

At one point, it seemed the two drunk comics were hellbent on making the most randy and puerile jokes imaginable.

In addition to the annual year-end shows, Channel Four has also produced some specials.

Timed to coincide with the run-up to the broadcaster's 30th-birthday celebrations in 2012, three episodes were broadcast, each focusing on an entire decade: the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s.

In the past few years, the show seems to have calmed down somewhat, which might explain why they brought on a rampaging dinosaur and let The Great British Baking Show co-host Mel Giedroyc spark a food fight during last year's The Big Fat Quiz of Everything.

Still, the show is a winner and for an hour and a half provides us viewers with a large slice of escapism and madness.

The fact that it probably takes two to three times as long to shoot and the comics go stir-crazy after being held for hours in the same studio perhaps contributes to this.

This evening, in the first of three editions, Carr once again is the host in charge of three teams who answer questions about everything from the last 100,000 years of human history.

Although to keep things slightly more manageable, the quiz is split into categories such as art, literature, television, music, geography, politics, science and celebrity.

Tonight's teams time are Jonathan Ross and Mel Giedroyc, Kristen Schaal and David Mitchell, and Bob Mortimer and Claudia Winkleman.

Viewers can also expect a few special guests, including Jon Snow and Joey Essex as well as some other unexpected visitors.

PICK OF THE WEEK

The Big Fat Quiz of Everything, Monday, Channel 4, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Wild France with Ray Mears
ITV, 8pm
Ray travels to the west of Brittany to explore the rugged coastline and heading out by boat to its nearby islands. On his journey, he has a close encounter with bottlenose dolphins when they swim up to the vessel and also visits a seal colony and meets seaweed fishermen before heading back to shore. By the rocks, he discovers peregrines that have build their nest dangerously close to land, while Ray heads down to the beach to look for shellfish with a local expert and learns about Brittany's high tides. Last in the series.

Kate Humble: My Sheepdog and Me
BBC2, 9pm
The broadcaster sets out to breed Welsh sheepdog puppies from her beloved pet Teg, learns about the threat facing British herding dogs and tries to train Teg to work in the traditional Welsh way. Along the way, Kate meets a team at the University of Aberystwyth whose groundbreaking DNA research reveals some remarkable facts about the breed, and if Teg can produce a litter of healthy puppies, it would play a big part in helping one of Britain's unique herding dogs survive for generations to come.

TUESDAY
Heroes of Helmand: The British Army's Great Escape
Channel 4, 9pm
Documentary revealing how a company of British soldiers fought under siege in 2006 for more than 50 days in a remote Afghanistan town. Trapped in a small compound, outgunned, outnumbered, and at the mercy of the Taliban, the fight to hold Musa Quala became one of the most important last stands in UK history – a quarter of all the ammunition used by the British Army in Helmand for the whole of 2006 was fired in less than two months. Ex-soldiers tell their story and share the footage they captured.

WEDNESDAY
Olympics 2016
BBC1, 1.45pm
Hazel Irvine presents the latest live coverage on day 12 of the Games in Rio. Defending champion Mo Farah features in the men's 5,000m heats at the Olympic Stadium from 14.05, looking to make it through to yet another major final, before the decathlon long jump at 14.35, the women's 800m heats at 14.55, the men's steeplechase final at 15.50 and the decathlon shot put from 16.15. The athletics action is interspersed with coverage from the National Equestrian Centre, where the team show jumping final takes place, with Great Britain looking to defend their title.

Celeb Trolls: We're Coming to Get You, Thursday, Channel 5, 10pm

THURSDAY
Celeb Trolls: We're Coming to Get You
Channel 5, 10pm
Since finding fame as one of the Saturdays, singer Frankie Bridge has been on the receiving end of hurtful online harassment. Now, she's meeting some of the other people who have also fallen victim to ëtrolls', including Chris Maloney, who received death threats following his appearances on The X Factor, and Nicola Brookes, who has spent five years dealing with appalling images and allegations, all because of one tame online comment. Perhaps most shockingly of all, Denise Fergus, the mother of murdered toddler James Bulger, reveals how cruel individuals regularly taunt her about her family's loss. However, Frankie is fighting back with the help of a team of Troll Trackers, who hope to identify some of the people behind this anonymous abuse and hold them accountable for their actions.

FRIDAY
Amazing Spaces Shed of the Year
Channel 4, 8pm
This year's competition has featured everything from a Star Wars theme, real-life crocodiles, hydraulics and Viking hideouts, to 360-degree rotating floors, nuclear bunkers, sheds on wheels and entire shed villages. There was a record 2,825 entries into the competition and tonight sees the conclusion, as George Clarke and his fellow judges choose one shed from all the category winners to crown overall winner. But before that, they consider the sheds in the Budget category. To prove a good shed doesn't have to be extravagant or expensive, this selection includes a colourful beach house built for just £20, and the Cabins and Summerhouses which features a classic van and a dream structure in an allotment.

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The bungalows at Skegness Water Leisure Park

Try out one of the well-equipped pods

An overview of Skegness Water Leisure Park and its fishing lake

Relax and enjoy a spot of fishing

Forget football! You're on a winner at last with old favourite of mine

MANY a happy family holiday when I was a child was spent at Skegness. I never ventured back until I had children of my own – and the Lincolnshire coast is now firmly back in my affections.

There has been a bit of a theme running through my last three visits – England playing in major football tournaments. And we all know how that ends!

So, you're better off skipping any major sporting competition with home representation and just getting away from it. After all, that is what holidays are all about.

Home of the first ever Butlin's, Skegness, is, as the old poster campaign would have you believe, so bracing. It took a nightmare journey to find that was not necessarily so.

Mark Shipp checks in

Torrential rain had left the roads awash with floods and heavy traffic, and Elton John fans on the road to a concert led to further delays. That washed out the first day of our weekend, but we more than made up for it with summer weather the next day.

Our destination was Skegness Water Leisure Park, apt given the conditions we drove there in. That's the Leisure Park at Skegness Water, by the way, for those expecting a host of pool-based activities.

There is a well-stocked lake for the keen anglers though – together with a tackle shop. With Skegness Airfield running alongside the site, helicopter rides are available at certain times, while rail enthusiasts can take a ride on the Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway.

Skegness Water Leisure Park welcomes guests with caravans and tourers. Camping pods are accommodating, though, and very popular, sleeping either four or six, and coming with an outside wooded decking area, picnic bench and barbecue stand.

Seafood

Each pod is a fully insulated wooden structure with solid roof and lockable double-glazed French doors and windows. Electricity and heating is provided, while dogs are welcome in the four-berth pods.

As the site is family-orientated, large parties of three or more couples, mixed groups or single sex groups of three or more will not be accepted.

We stayed in one of the three holiday bungalows, which can sleep up to five people. These are let on a weekly basis from Saturday to Saturday during the main season, but short breaks are available out of season. Prices range from £335 to £550.

We ventured into town to enjoy the sun on our first day. And it wasn't bracing at all as we took in the beach, had a pub meal and tried out one of Skegness's myriad of crazy golf courses.

But there's more to the town than just hitting a ball into a little hole with an obstacle in the way. More to my taste were the little huts selling seafood.

Back on-site there's a family pub, the Barn Inn, providing live entertainment, free wi-fi and sports channels, though I have recommended switching off from all that. Plus, there is a general store, play area, amusement centre and salon.

The site is open until November 20. Call 01754 899400 or email enquiries@skegnesswaterleisurepark.co.uk

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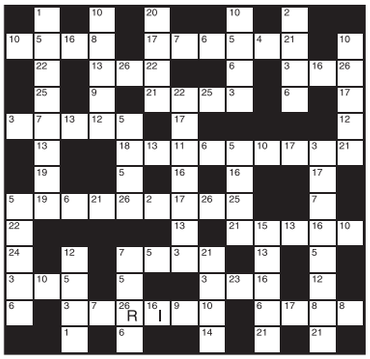
The Chronicle Thursday, August 11, 2016

BRAIN GYM No.390

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



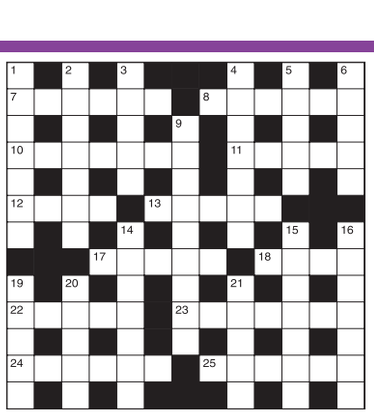
1	14
2	15
3	16 I
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26 R

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
O	M	U	D	Z	S	N	C	V	H	L	G	F
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
J	E	R	A	B	K	Q	X	P	W	Y	I	T

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

7. The standard put in front of an invader (6)
8. Father interrupts the others in a good meal (6)
10. Carter dead in the conflict (7)
11. The sum is a little rum to nearly everybody (5)
12. Deer took cover round the north (4)
13 & 17Ac. Instrument could make one a profit (10)
17. See 13 Across
18. See 6 Down
22. See 1 Down
23. It's a struggle for a hundred on trial (7)
24. See 21 Down
25. She's out of breath! (6)

Down

1 & 22Ac. Be informed, like the sailor or the boxer (4,3,5)
2. Nothing rising strangely from these sources (7)
3 & 19Dn. It bristles with artistic associations (5-5)
4. See 16 Down
5. See 20 Down
6. & 18Ac. Deadlock on the board (9)
9. It's a crime to break the cease-fire (9)
14. Have police band on the ship (7)
15. The colour to get a man upset (7)
16 & 4Dn. Does this provide middling warmth? (7,7)
19. See 3 Down.
20 & 5Dn. Accessories for roles not yet cast? (5,5)
21 & 24Ac. Certainly don't exaggerate description of one nervously tense (5,6)

Quick Clues:

Across

7. Share (6)
8. Contention (6)
10. Enterprise (7)
11. Knave (5)
12. Profound (4)
13. Nip (5)
17. Lukewarm (5)
18. Dumb (4)
22. Begin (5)
23. Miser (7)
24. Go (6)
25. Hold back (6)

Down

1. Supply (7)
2. Dwarfed (7)
3. Sham (5)
4. Allure (7)
5. Tint (5)
6. Drive off (5)
9. Lacking (9)
14. Discourse (7)
15. Deserter (7)
16. Title (7)
19. Privately (5)
20. Glad (5)
21. Concur (5)

Sudoku

7	2				9			
	4		5					
				3		8	1	
4	7	2				3	9	
			4					
	8	9		2		4	5	1
	3	6		7				
					5		4	
			1				2	9

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

1	5	6	9	7	8	3	2	4
9	2	4	5	1	3	6	8	7
8	3	7	4	6	2	5	9	1
6	7	1	3	5	9	8	4	2
2	8	9	6	4	1	7	3	5
3	4	5	8	2	7	1	6	9
4	9	3	7	8	5	2	1	6
5	6	2	1	3	4	9	7	8
7	1	8	2	9	6	4	5	3

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Craft; 4 Stumble; 8 Nunnery; 9 Icing; 10 Owls; 11 Underdog; 13 Mass; 14 User; 16 Outright; 17 Taxi; 20 India; 21 Ovation; 22 Targets; 23 Easel. Down: 1 Contortionist; 2 Annul; 3 Tier; 4 Saying; 5 Universe; 6 Builder; 7 Engaged signal; 12 Estimate; 13 Matador; 15 Shoots; 18 Adits; 19 Wage. QUICK - Across: 1 Felon; 4 Dismiss; 8 Ruction; 9 Mimic; 10 Keen; 11 Rehearse; 13 Tune; 14 True; 16 Laudable; 17 Maze; 20 Dying; 21 Elevate; 22 Extreme; 23 Dress. Down: 1 Foreknowledge; 2 Lucre; 3 Naif; 4 Danced; 5 Symmetry; 6 Immerse; 7 Secretiveness; 12 Entangle; 13 Tourist; 15 Allege; 18 Awake; 19 Mend.

Thinking space

Quiz

1. Who won Oscars for Klute and Coming Home?
2. In which mountains are St Bernards employed?
3. Which plant's leaves are the common antidote to nettle stings?
4. Which TV programme did Roy Castle present for 22 years?
5. The 38th parallel became a boundary within which country in 1945?
6. Of which organisation did Ros Hepplewhite resign as head in 1994?
7. Which brothers based an opera on a novel by DuBose Heyward?
8. What type of fish is a torpedo fish?
9. Which Carry On star played Peggy in EastEnders?
10. Which temperature scale starts at absolute zero?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Pocahontas; 2 A goat; 3 Mercury and Venus; 4 Lindsay Anderson; 5 Phosphorus; 6 Orkneys; 7 Just William; 8 Homer; 9 Japan; 10 Conservative.

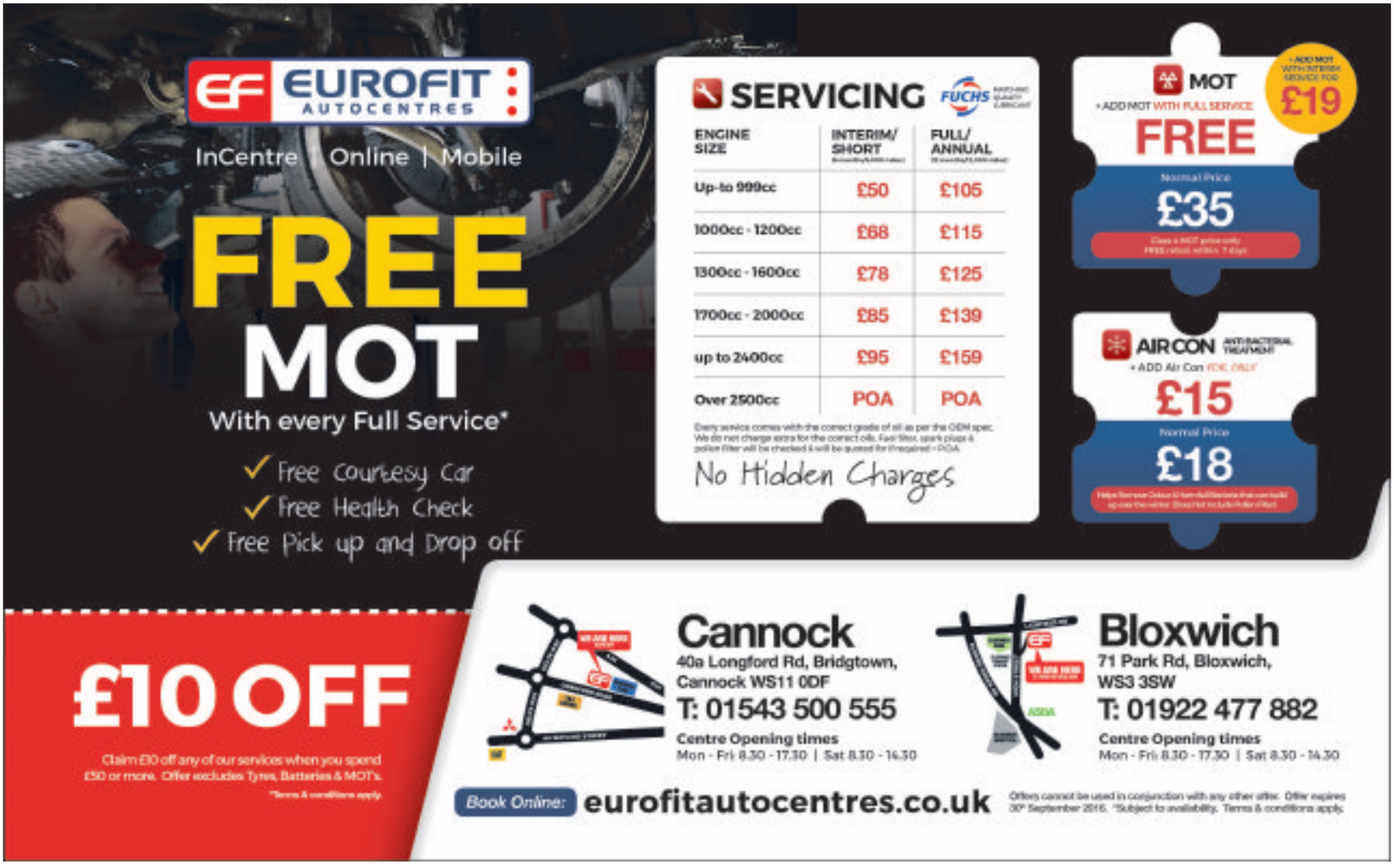
Niner: CALUMNIES

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

32784 gives a good man,
179 gives a bad man,
1567428 gives a religious man.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9



PROPERTY

YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO HOME BUYING AND LETTING

Two-bedroomed first floor apartment smartly presented

For a deposit of just £565 and a rent of £465 per calender month, this very attractive two-bedroomed first floor unfurnished first floor apartment in Victoria Avenue, Bloxwich, could soon become your new home.

Beautifully presented throughout in neutral shades, this well designed property has accommodation which briefly comprises an open plan kitchen, living/dining room, a bathroom and two bedrooms.

The home has gas central heating, uPVC double glazing and comes with a communal area and two parking spaces.

In a smart red brick design, this is a good sized apartment which is packed with appeal.

The open plan kitchen has smart modern white units with contrasting working surfaces and splash-back areas, wood-effect flooring and a window blind, a sink, wall mounted boiler, hob, oven and stainless steel extractor.

Being open plan, the living/dining room is carpeted and has modern French windows opening to a Juliet balcony and window blinds and includes a contemporary fire inset into the wall.

Both bedrooms have the same matching carpeting and also come with window blinds.

The bathroom has a modern white suite complemented by splash-back and wall and floor tiling and a curved sink set into bathroom furniture.

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Well presented and spacious

Well presented and deceptively spacious, this three-bedroomed mid town house in Abbey Square, Mossley, is for sale through L&S Prestige Estates at £105,000.

Overlooking green space to the fore, it has a hall, lounge and kitchen/diner. To the first floor there are three bedrooms and a modern family bathroom. To the outside there is off road parking to the fore along with an alternative side access to the property and an enclosed private rear garden.

MOSSLEY

£105,000

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Well-planned four-bed home with potential must be viewed

This four-bedroom detached house in Springvale Avenue, Walsall, must be viewed.

On sale with Edwards Moore, its asking price is £399,995.

The agents say viewing is essential to appreciate its well-planned home with gas central heating and double glazing.

The property has been extended and modernised but still has potential for more.

It includes porch reception, guest WC, living room, dining/sitting room, conservatory, large breakfast kitchen with appliances, utility, four bedrooms, two bathrooms, rear garden, off-street parking and double garage.

WALSALL

£399,995

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EPC: E — CHURCH STREET, DARLASTON

- Split Level Flat
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- Lounge/Dining Area
- Kitchen
- Shower Room
- GCH & Part Double Glazed

£395pcm - plus fees

EPC: B — RUSSELL STREET, WILLENHALL

- First Floor Apartment
- Reception Hallway
- Lounge, Two Bedrooms
- Kitchen with appliances
- Bathroom, GCH, UPVC DG
- Parking

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EPC: B — FIELD ROAD, BLOXWICH

- Ground Floor Apartment
- Open Plan Kitchen
- Living / Dining Area
- Bathroom, Two Bedrooms
- GCH, UPVC DG
- 2 Parking Spaces

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EPC: E — POPLAR AVENUE, WEDNESFIELD

- Refurbished Semi-De-tached House
- Hall, Lounge
- Breakfast Kitchen
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- Bathroom
- GCH, UPVC DG

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EPC: D — PARK AVENUE, ROWLEY REGIS

- Semi-Detached House
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EPC: D — EDINBURGH ROAD, WALSALL

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Martin Drive
Willenhall

GREAT SIZE Viewing essential to appreciate the size of this 3 bedroom semi detached house, modern kitchen, dining room, lounge/diner, conservatory, 3 double bedrooms and good size bathroom, driveway and good size rear garden, double glazing and central heating (where specified) no upward chain, call 01902 633323. EPC - D

OFFERS AROUND: £145,000

New Road
Willenhall

Internal Inspection Is Essential To Appreciate The Size And Specification Of This Unique Property, Which Briefly Comprises Of; Entrance Hall, Lounge, Kitchen Diner With Island, Two Good Sized Bedrooms (Master With Ensuite Shower Room), And Family Bathroom. EPC - C

OFFERS AROUND: £130,000

Tyler Road
Willenhall

Paul Dubberley Are Pleased To Present This Conveniently Located Extended Property Which Benefits From Entrance Hall, Lounge, Kitchen Diner, Downstairs Bedroom/Reception With Ensuite Wet Room, Three Bedrooms And Family Bathroom.

OFFERS AROUND: £105,000

Cemetery Road
Willenhall

Refurbished Three Bedroom End Terrace Home. Lounge, Sitting Room, Fitted Kitchen, Downstairs Family Bathroom And Three Bedrooms.
Externally There Is A Secluded Rear Garden.

OFFERS AROUND: £100,000

Coltham Road
Willenhall

Three Bedroom Mid Terrace In Popular Residential Location, The Property Comprises Of; Hall, Lounge, Breakfast Kitchen, Downstairs Bathroom, Three Bedrooms And Upstairs W.C. Viewings Highly Advised. No Chain EPC D

OFFERS AROUND: £96,950

Barnett Road
Willenhall

Three Bedroom End Of Terrace. Property Comprises Of; Hall, Lounge, Dining Kitchen, Downstairs Bathroom And Three Bedrooms, The Property Further Benefits From Driveway To Front And To The Rear There Is A Private Rear Garden.

OFFERS AROUND: £65,000

Jenkins Close
Bilston

3 Bedroom duplex apartment over 3 floors, lounge, kitchen, bathroom, storage room, double glazing, no upward chain, call Paul Dubberley to view.

OFFERS AROUND: £69,500

Beacon Road
Willenhall

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Noose Lane
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OFFERS AROUND: £125,000

Great Bridge Road
Bilston

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OFFERS AROUND: £87,500

Cedar Road
Willenhall

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OFFERS AROUND: £110,000

Birmingham New Road
Bilston

REFURBISHED 2 Bedroom Terraced house, Lounge, Kitchen, Bathroom , Garden, Central Heating, Double Glazed (where specified) and no upward chain, call Bilston 01902 494966

OFFERS AROUND: £90,000

Cresswell Crescent
Walsall

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OFFERS AROUND: £75,000

Ambleside Close
Bilston

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OFFERS AROUND: £90,000

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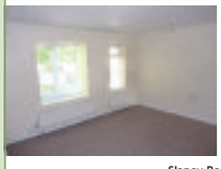

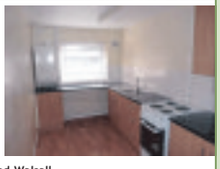

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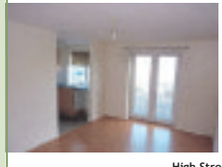

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- Two Bedroom Ground Floor Flat
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NEW

Cheniston Road,Willenhall

- Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
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- Through Lounge/Diner
- Fitted Kitchen
- Separate Utility
- Family Bathroom

Monthly Rental Of £625

High Street,Walsall

- Two Bedroom 2nd Floor Apartment
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- Open Plan Lounge/Kitchen
- Bathroom with Shower
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The Chronicle Thursday, August 11, 2016

Heritage and nostalgia

By John Griffiths

As Europe's oldest motorcycle manufacturer – continuously producing bikes since 1921 – you'd expect heritage and nostalgia to be high on their agenda.

That's certainly true of its two latest models in terms of styling, which to some extent conceals the fact that both are brand new, up-to-date machines sharing the same new and improved engine.

The Roamer and the Bobber both hark back to a previous era, much like successful retro-styled machines from Triumph and Harley-Davidson.

But for afficionadoes the Guzzi is unique, not least because of its combination of a characterful big V-twin engine mounted across the frame and shaft drive.

It makes the Italian machine feel like no other, particularly when you feel the shimmy of torque through the saddle if you blip the throttle on down changes.

Most modern bikes do the job with commendable efficiency: the Guzzi also feels alive.

Both Roamer and Bobber (the model tested here) are powered by the all-new 850cc V9 engine. With 55bhp it's not the most powerful V-twin, but it does have a 7bhp advantage over Moto Guzzi's older V7s, Rather more important, with this style of bike, is that fact that it has more torque – now 62Nm – which is available at much lower revs (3,000 instead of 5,000rpm).

It's rather surprising what a difference this makes. It feels more flexible and responsive, pullling away smoothly from low revs in top (sixth) gear yet also capable of kicking up its heels for a rapid overtake if you change down a cog or two.

This is what you want from a cruiser bike, and this together with its low saddle and straight bars make the Bobber particularly novice-friendly. A slightly down-powered version of the V9 (to make it learner legal) is due out later in the year.

Steering is accurate (partly due to that big front tyre) and handling is benign. The single disc brakes (320mm at the front and 260mm at the rear) come with ABS and are well up to the task expected of them.

The suspension is firmish (although nowhere near as hard as a typical sports bike) and seems a reasonable compromise for this style of machine.

The seat is low (just 770mm) and you sit behind almost straight bars in a comfortable, upright position. The footpegs are slightly forward of the seat, with you knees tucked up behind the cylinder heads.

The lack of wind protection will help to keep you honest, as while the Guzzi will reach 70mph in short order you probably won't want to maintain that speed over long distances due to the pressure on your arms. But then, it is a cruiser not a racer.

The instruments are housed in a single clock in the centre of the bars – an analogue speedo with a digital trip computer – you can flick through the various modes with your left thumb.

The Bobber costs £7,999, the Roamer is £100 less.

The differences are largely cosmetic, although arguably the Bobber has the edge in the style stakes, based as it is on a minimalist style of chopped or bobbed bikes which became popular in the US during the 1930s. It's a fashion trend which never really went away, particularly among custom bikeenthusiasts.

The Roamer and the Bobber both hark back to a previous era

One cue to its identity is the fat front tyre (130/90 on 16-inch wheels in the Guzzis case) and although red is a colour option, the test bike just looked right in matt black with yellow decals.

The company seems to agree, as it expects this combination to account for around 80 per cent of sales.

It's paint job, slightly cut down mudguards and more forward-leaning, sportier riding position give the Bobber a more hard-core, aggressive attitude than the softer Roamer. That's as it should be, as the first Bobbers were essentially the hot-roads of the two-wheeled world.

Hatchback has leading edge

By John Griffiths

Renault has hit the ground running with the launch of its new Megane range.

The front runner is the 203bhp GT, but many potential custoimers will be just as happy with the 108bhp diesel, a real charmer for its punchy performance, low running costs and certainly one of the quietest and refined oil burners in its class.

Prices for the new Megane, with a range of petrol and diesel engines, start at £16,600 while the more powerful and comprehensively equipped GT starts from £25,500.

Estate versions will join the range this autumn, with a diesel hybrid next year, and it would be very surprising if an even more powerful Renaultsport flagship doesn't make an appearance in the near future.

When designing a new car, factors such as aerodynamics (critical for fuel economy) and interior space are limiting factors, so it's no wonder many family hatchbacks have a decidedly samey appeareance.

But there's a great deal of French style which sets the Megane apart and should make it easily recognisable on the road, The low, slippery front end is characterised by the C-shaped daytime running lights, with the big chrome diamond badge in the centre which is Renault's new marque signature.

Sculpted side panels take you to the rear of the car to a unique and stylish rear light cluster which, for the first time, is also lit up during daytime to give the Megane a look all of its own. The wide rear haunches, tapering to towards the front, make the new Megane look even wider and give it a purposeful look even at rest.

Underneath the skin there is a range of efficient engines, some of the latest technological safety and driving aids and the use of higher grade materials around the cabin which has created the ambience of a more expensive, premium brand.

It is remarkably quiet – the diesel in particular must be top of the class in this respect – with a much stiffer chassis, thicker glass and a lot of attention sound-deadening foam, felt and pads.

For those who opt for the GT, some noise will be a requirement of the driving experience so in sport mode there's an electronically produced soundtrack simulating a growly exhaust.

The driving position is cockpit-like, with superbly shaped dual foam sports seats (alcantara in the GT) which support a wide range of body shapes, and there's a plentiful range of adjustment.

In the centre is the large new touch screen controlling a range of vehicle systems, including navigation where fitted,

Touchscreen

All Meganes are available with the new Multi-sense drive control system, operated through the central touchscreen. It allows the driver to programme the desired driving characteristics – neutral (or automatic), sport, comfort, personal and eco.

These select the appropriate throttle response, engine sound, steering weight, climate control output, interior lighting and, on cars with automated tranmission, the speed of gearchanges,

On GT models it also governs the use of the new 4Control active four wheel steering system, a feature unique to the Megane in this sector – in fact it's something the car shaes with the Porsche GT3.

Purely mechanical, passive rear wheel steering has been around for a few years – the old Honda Prelude being one example. But Renault's computer-controlled system, where the position of the rear wheels are monitored 100 times per second, is a a clear advance. The amount by which the rear wheels move is small – 2.7 degrees – but the difference is big.

At low speeds, around town, the rear wheels turn in the opposite direction to those at the front, much reducing the Megane's turning circle and endowing it with the agility of a city car.

On the open road, the rear wheels turn with those at the front by just one degree, making for a quicker turn-in, with great stability and roadholding. You can actually feel it working in your favour.

The car's suspension is a good compromise between comfort and roadholding. The GT (not surprisingly) feels

firmer, perhaps in part due to its larger, 18-inch alloys and lower profile tyres as well as its Renaultsport-developed springing.

The GT comes only with the seven-speed dual clutch automated tranmission, with which you can choose an eco drive or a more sporty, free-revving performance via the Multi-sense system.

Its 1.6 turbocharged petrol engine produces 205PS and 280Nm of torque, plenty to take the car from a standstill to 62mph in 7.1 seconds, yet driven in gentler style it can achieve 47mpg (official test) and a CO2 figure of 143g/km.

Figures for the second test car, the 110PS, 1.5 turbodiesel, are 11.3 seconds and up to 72.4mpg, with a tax-efficient 96g/km of CO2 emissions.

The other petrol engine choice is a turbocharged 1.2 producing 130PS, the same as the 1.6 turbo diesel option.

Standard equipment multiple airbags, cruise control, ABS, stability control, tinted windows, fingertip audio remote control, and full Bluetooth connectivity. Automatic headlamps and wipers, automatic climate control leather upoholstery, and rear parking and sensors are added further up the range.

New technology available includes adaptive cruise control (including active emergency braking), traffic sign recognition with overspeed prevention and hands- free parking.

There are rivals to the new Megane offering high-efeciency engines but the French hatchback has an edge when it matches that with its premium car ambience, refinement and distinctive styling.

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Official fuel consumption for the ŠKODA range pictured above in mpg (litres/100km): Urban 36.7 (7.7) to 50.4 (5.6); Extra Urban 53.3 (5.3) to 72.4 (3.9); Combined 45.6 (6.2) to 62.8 (4.5). CO_2 emissions for the ŠKODA range pictured above are 142 to 108g/km. Standard EU test figures are for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results.

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Single Women

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LINDA, 58, lonely lady, likes walks in the countryside and meals out, WLTM a gentleman, 59-64, n/s, Coventry area. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423547**

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3003 Box 419673**

CARRIE single 29yr old slim pretty Care Assistant, looking for a fun guy for nights in/out, good times, love and laughter. Give me a ring. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423489**

KIM, 32yrs, attractive blonde lady seeks discreet gent for daytime distractions. Aca. **Tel: 0906 515 3007 Box 421657**

BEV 32, 5ft, petite, very pretty, trendy with a great figure and big personality, loves animals, children and WLTM fun male to be my soul mate. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423473**

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. **Tel: No: 0906 515 3011 Box: 409715**

CAROL, 38, slim gorgeous brunette with lots of interests looking to put some romance back into life, seeking willing male to spoil rotten and love. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423439**

KERRY, 35yrs, married in open relationship, attractive, tall, slim and very presentable. Seeks discreet gent any age for casual pleasurable encounters. **Tel: 0906 515 3043 Box 422363**

SANDY, mature, very young looking widow seeks fit young man to enjoy fun, cuddles and kisses. Call me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423493**

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. **Tel: 0906 515 3019 Box: 413399**

DONNA, vivacious slim brunette, 48, lives for today, fit and fun loving, seeks active, easygoing male for companionship. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423477**

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3023 Box 421375**

LYN, 51, tall curvy blue eyed brunette loves countryside, motor sports and cuddles, seeks tactile romantic male for some fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423443**

LORRAINE, attractive solvent brunette, 34yrs, own house/car wltm gent any age, looks unimportant but must have GSOH. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3031 Box 422415**

JEAN, 56, shy brunette with lots of love to give to the right man seeks mature male to share relaxed relationship with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423305**

JESS, pretty blonde lady. 29yrs, feminine and caring. Loves older mature men who are worldly wise. Looks unimportant must have GSOH. **Text Only Box: 4000683**

STACY 28yr old gorgeous brunette with buxom figure, intelligent and sensual, WLTM genuine male to get to know for fun dates and more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 377509**

KATRIANA, professional sincere lady, 48yrs loves to have a good time. Very sensual and loves men of all ages. Please text me for a chat. **Text Only Box 4148978**

PAULINE attractive petite nurse, loves evenings in/out, looking for honest male to share loving friendship and good times. Discretion expected/assured. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 379535**

VERY attractive intelligent blonde, 59, WLTM tall attractive solvent man. No Tattoos. South Yorks. **Text only Mailbox: 5430085**

55 year old female looking for friendship, meals out, coffee, chats, work part time and carer for parent. **Text only Mailbox: 5517508**

VERY attractive blonde lady, own house in lovely village, loves travel, entertaining, exercise, would like to meet tall attractive solvent male. **Text only Mailbox: 5430085**

CAROLINE, slim attractive 40's fit female. OHAC, divorced and ready to be romanced again, seeks similar minded male. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423301**

JEAN, 56, shy brunette with lots of love to give to the right man seeks mature male to share relaxed relationship with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423305**

BLACK, attractive cultured lady seeks white gentleman, age 40-60 for friendship first perhaps LTR later. **Text only Mailbox: 5511784**

KATHERINE, 45, romantic, slim, feminine, loves to live life to the full, seeks adventurous outgoing male to appreciate and share intimate times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423261**

LORNA 34, sensual, shapely brunette WLTM tall friendly guy for romantic no strings fun. Ask no questions, I'll tell no lies! **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423241**

CAROL 37 attractive slim blonde, curves in all the right places, nice personality, good company, looking for caring man for fun times. **Tel: No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420757**

CATHY attractive 35yr singleton, varied interests, looking for trustworthy male for companionship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423231**

SARAH 39, blonde hair, blue/green eyes, fun loving and romantic looking for new possibilities with well built, dark haired tactile male. Age unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423093**

MATURE female 63, large breasted, seeks assertive younger man 30-50 for adult fun. Must be discreet. **Text only Mailbox: 5495834**

SINGLE tall blonde, 30yrs, bored of life's mundane routines looking for some discreet fun with likeminded man, any age/looks. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423089**

CAROL, 44, brunette with plenty of spare time on her hands seeks special mature male for fun times together. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423057**

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ALISON 28, feminine, outgoing, adventurous brunette who knows what she wants, seeks fit, fun loving man to sweep her off her feet. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423061**

SABINA, 35, outgoing attractive brunette, fit and carefree just looking for fun times without complications, maybe more later. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423003**

EILEEN 49, lovely brunette, adventurous and eager to please seeks intelligent male to share the fun side of life together. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423007**

JOANNA, 49 years old, looking to meet a man for friendship 50/60 years old. **Text only Mailbox: 5428223**

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LOVELY Oriental lady in Carmarthenshire seeks older man 70+ to share company and special times and to be a partner. **Text only Mailbox: 5506384**

RETIRED happy, caring, attractive female, likes gardening, travel, animals, comedy, seeks tall, funny, kind chap, Shropshire. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411459**

LADY, 48, 5ft2, hazel eyes, brown hair, likes bowling, meals out, nights in, ice skating, looking for a toy boy, 30-42, who is fun and enjoys life to have a good time with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422679**

JANE, very attractive blonde, own house in lovely village, car etc, loves travel to sunny places, entertaining, exercise WLTM male with similar interests. **Text only Mailbox: 5430085**

ATTRACTIVE energetic mature lady, looking for well-travelled, solvent companion for holidays, dining out and days away. **Text only Mailbox: 5502846**

BROWN eyed brummie female 65 smoker likes music, cinema, theatre, meals out, WLTM male 66 - 73 for LTR. **Text only Mailbox: 5501142**

BROWN eyed brummie female, 65, smoker, likes music, cinema, meals out, WLTM male, 66 -73, for LTR. **Text only Mailbox: 4400186**

YOUNG, big boobed, single mum. Looking for a fun guy, but wants to be spoiled. Relationship ideally but happy with no strings fun. **Text only Mailbox: 5496828**

ATTRACTIVE slim 54yr old female looking for caring genuine male 50-58 yrs to wine and dine with, share nice times with, please get in touch. **Text only Mailbox: 5395695**

TINA, 41, WLTM Muslim men, Indian Pakistani Kurdish or Turkish for daytime or evening fun, can accommodate, can travel, very discreet. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422927**

JACKIE, 49, dark hair, green eyes, cuddly build, likes going out, gym, reading, looking for an honest gentleman for friendship/possible relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422257**

MANDY 44, fun flirty blonde, petite size 6-8, gorgeous green eyes seeks special male for friendship and uncomplicated love. Age unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422863**

FEMALE, 33, blue eyes, long blonde hair, pretty, slim, looking for Asian man to have some discreet no strings fun with. **Text only Mailbox: 5495296**

GILL 61, slim dark eyed blonde seeks tall carefree male who is looking for someone special for fun times with no complications. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422843**

WIDOW, 5ft2, looking for a gentleman for friendship, days out, meals out and for friendship and companionship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422657**

CILLA, 40, tall blue eyed size 12 brunette, loves horses, country/beach walks, cosy nights infront of fire, good wine/food, WLTM similar male who appreciates my interests. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422009**

SINGLE 40s, seeks Indian Pakistani Kurdish males, for no strings, day or evening fun, I am discreet, I can travel and I can accommodate. Midlands/Stoke on Trent. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422921**

ANNE, 40, pretty professional fun female with great curves, looking for fun and romance with down to earth male looking for similar. Any age/status. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422711**

FEMALE 38, large breasted, seeks Indian/Pakistani/Kurdish male for daytime fun. Can Travel/accom. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417233**

ALISON, lonely shy blue eyed blonde, 46, just wanting to be loved, looking for caring man to pamper in return for mutual TLC. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422859**

BARBARA, 44, friendly and outgoing but lonely, seeking similar lonely male to pamper, enjoy fun times and affection with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422839**

MAUREEN, 38, pretty brunette, new to the area and very lonely, looking to meet someone understanding for convenient friendship, 30-60yrs. Can travel. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422815**

TINA, 43, young looking attractive single female looking for love, with similar lonely heart resorting to advertising in the hope of finding love. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421613**

JACKIE 40, slim brunette, with sultry green eyes seeks tall guy with nice eyes who understands women, for some really good times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422819**

RITA 41, exotic olive skinned female, friendly, chatty, loves to entertain, seeks loving honest male to pamper and make happy. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422723**

PETRIANA, 44, very attractive, voluptuous blonde, with old-fashioned values, seeks romantic down to earth male for a special relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422717**

PASSIONATE broadminded curvy lady 67 seeks very assertive discreet younger male 25-45 for no strings fun, looks unimportant. **Text only Mailbox: 5480845**

JULIE, petite, slim, attractive blonde young looking early 40's, enjoys wining, dining, theatre seeking good looking romantic male, 45-55, for mutual spoiling. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422709**

JEAN, 75, black hair, hazel eyes, medium build, likes dancing, singing, gardening, bingo, meals out, days out, Scotland, WLTM a gentleman any age for company and friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422651**

SARA 34yr old single mum looking for a genuine male to make me laugh again and help put the spark back into my life. Looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422541**

SARAH, brown hair, dark eyes, likes crafts, cooking, cinema, socialising, looking for a male friend, 30-35, possibly leading to relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422589**

JEAN, 75, lives in West Midlands, likes gardening, bingo, dancing, travelling, generally nice things, WLTM local gentleman for company and friendship, hoping to hear from you. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422571**

JOANNE, 48, curvy black female, likes cooking, cinema, socialising, seeking friendship leading to LTR, must be honest, romantic, caring and loyal and have a GSOH. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422633**

JO 45, hardworking nurse with crazy sense of humour, looking for fun male with plenty of ideas to spice up her spare time. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422545**

50YRS, old attractive lady. Sheila, caring honest, seeks discreet gent. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422469**

SARA 34yr old single mum looking for a genuine male to make me laugh again and help put the spark back into my life. Looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422541**

LORNA 28, sensual blue-eyed blonde with a beautiful smile, seeking intelligent guy in good shape for new experiences and fun loving. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422491**

MICHELLE, 37, pretty, very fit, well travelled seeks active, broadminded male to share new experiences and adventures with. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422459**

BIRMINGHAM female 65, smoker, likes music, cinema, theatre, meals out, WLTM male 66 - 73 for LTR. **Text only Mailbox: 5474599**

70 years young attractive caring genuine lady, seeks honest reliable man for friendship days out and poss LTR. Bristol/Bath area. **Text only Mailbox: 4648891**

PAT, petite blonde lady, GSOH, young looking for her age, seeks genuine gent any age with GSOH. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422393**

RITA, , seeks a genuine male for friendship, days out, shes very friendly, genuine and social, give her a call ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422403**

Single Men

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GUY, 47, 5ft7, dark hair, blue eyes, loves music, DVDs, nights in and out, seeks female, 30-42, for friendship and LTR, in the Leamington Spa/Rugby area. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423559**

JIMBO, friendly fun loving chap, 42yrs, own building company. Divorced, no kids. Wants a kind caring lady to spoil, any age, single mums welcome. **Text Only Box: 4036422**

TONY, 58, tall, dark hair, seeks mature female, 65+, for hassle free liaisons, looks not important. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423389**

KEN, 53, married and looking for no strings, adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423379**

ANDY, from West Brom, slim, very young looking 49, looking for a special lady to spend fun times together and loving relationship. **Tel: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421747**

MALE, young looking 49, 5ft5, slim build, from West Bromwich, likes films, socialising, looking for a fun lady who likes to laugh, for good times/possible LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 312443**

ROBERT, slim, intelligent, N/S, 50's, seeks attractive, younger female for uncomplicated friendship and fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 312443**

MALE 59, N/S, fit, slim, seeks attractive slim female for discreet no strings friendship and fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413655**

RETIRED widower, 5'7", slim salt/pepper hair, quite active, interests vary, loyal, trustworthy, reliable, seeks mature lady for friendship. **Text only Mailbox: 4906469**

SINGLE 38 year old male, fun loving, tall, blue eyes, looking for caring 30 to 50 year old female, passionate and fun loving. **Text only Mailbox: 5516385**

FIT mechanic, looking for female any age for friends with benefits arrangement. **Text only Mailbox: 4605333**

MALE 45, easy going, looking for a lady for adult fun. Cardiff area. **Text only Mailbox: 5515485**

MATURE, passionate male, 30s WLTM a lady, grab the chance while I am single! **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423195**

JOE, semi retired, young looking and acting, slim and fit, 5ft8, considered good company, looking for daytime meets. Let's see if we click. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422803**

MALE, 41, shaved hair, dark brown eyes, athletic build, open minded, up for NSA fun with a female. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423349**

WIDOWER, 73, near Coventry, healthy and very active, seeks female, 58-68, for companionship, days out, theatre, and regular short trips to property in Marbaia. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423339**

TALL attractive male, 56, looking to meet a mature woman, size 18 plus, any age, for close fun times. **Text only Mailbox: 5410860**

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PROFESSIONAL male, 56, young looking, slim, fit, N/S, seeks younger female for fun and friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 310626**

ROBERT 50's, N/S, slim, easygoing, GSOH, seeks attractive female for discreet friendship and fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 358600**

ATTRACTIVE male, 58, N/S, fit, missing pleasant female company, seeks open-minded, slim, attractive female for discreet liaisons. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 384406**

MEDIUM build male, single, enjoys days out, country pubs and keep fit, looking for a soul mate. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423189**

ADVENTUROUS 36-year-old male, dark hair, slim, likes music, cycling and photography, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417235**

MATURE male seeking fun times, Coventry area. **Text only Mailbox: 4830151**

EDDIE, young looking 54, painter and decorator by trade, likes going out and having a good time, sport and all kinds of music, looking for a LTR with a caring, honest, trustworthy person, as I am. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423113**

47 year old guy, seeks female, 30-42, in the Leamington Spa/Rugby area, for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423105**

IRISH widower, 65, 5ft9, GSOH, WLTM a lady for friendship in the North Birmingham area. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423071**

IRISH male, 60s, 5ft9, independent, n/s, wishes to meet a lady in the Birmingham area. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420859**

SHAUN, short black hair, mixed race, 5ft7, average build, looking for a lady, looks not important but a great personality is a must! Hanley area. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423107**

DAVE, 54, 5ft10, medium build, easy going, happy, looking for an attractive, loving and caring female, 45-65, for friendship and relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423073**

MIKE 49, slim, young looks, seeks female, 35-50 for friendship and going out. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 356651**

MALE 57, tall, seeks mature female, 50-75, for close adult fun, any size or status. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422409**

GENT 48, youthful outlook, likes countryside, keep fit, karaoke, seeks soul mate for fun times. N Shropshire. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408411**

TALL male 56, seeks close adult fun with open-minded woman, 40 to 75, any status or size. **Text only Mailbox: 5410860**

52 yr old male, average build, fit. lonely, seeks a lady for fun times, LTR, soul mate, or discreet dates, can travel. **Text only Mailbox: 5418572**

41YR old male WLTM local lady for no strings fun and meets. Honest, kind, gentlemanly, can't accommodate. Coventry. **Text only Mailbox: 5498485**

MALE, 49, 5ft10, brown hair, brown eyes, average looks, GSOH, OHAC, honest, romantic, animal lover, likes country pubs, walks along the canal and countryside, looking for somebody who is down to earth and fun loving. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 396440**

STAFFORDSHIRE man, 40, loves sport, music, dancing, politics, looking for friendship, possibly relationship, any age/race/looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422955**

CARING male, 45, kind, loving, animal lover, seeks female with similar qualities. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 394149**

MALE 46, brown hair/eyes, average looks/build, loving, caring, understanding, seeks female to share good times with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410845**

SHAUN, 49, brown hair, brown eyes, average looks, 16 and a half stone, good sense of humour, animal lover with loads of love and security to give to the right person. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418783**

TALL, attractive male, 62, GSOH, enjoys the normal things in life, going out to staying in, holidays etc, seeks lovely active petite/slimmish lady, 62-72, for an nice relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422931**

MARK, genuine male, 52, considered attractive, home owner, well travelled, likes keeping fit, looking for a lady for my soul mate, first time advertiser. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422935**

ANDY, single, 53, looking for a mature, sexy lady, age/looks unimportant, for fun and adventure. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422893**

Gay Singles

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MATURE male WLTM similar mature sultray assertive male, for friendship in the Derbyshire/Staffordshire area. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422191**

MALE, 75, seeking a male 70+, for discreet meetings, can accommodate, ACA. Coventry. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423413**

MALE, 72, seeks bi-curious or gay male, 60 plus, can accommodate ACA. Coventry area. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419767**

BI male 59 seeks males 40 to 65 for friendship near Tamworth. **Text only Mailbox: 4355756**

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Just Friends

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

PAT 67, attractive, likes reading, holidays, seeking female, 65-72 for friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405985**

Customer support
Call 0207 720 7130 Monday - Friday 10am - 4pm
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CALL CHARGES*: DATING 18+ and have the bill payer's permission. 0844 calls cost 7 pence per min, 090 calls cost £1.55 per min, plus your phone company's access charge. Calls are recorded and may appear on your bill. TEXT*: Text alerts are charged at £1.50 per week. To unsubscribe to text alerts, text DATING STOP to 63333. To cancel free match alerts, text STOP to 07781474042. For full T&Cs go to www.local dates-terms.co.uk/. REPLY BY TEXT*: 80098/89990 costs £1.50 per SMS received (max 150 characters). Guaranteed up to 4 messages for each message you send, Service only available where phone icon shown. Messages are moderated. Minimum 7 messages must be sent before contact details can be exchanged. This service is not computer generated. All messages are responded to by real service users. No meetings can be guaranteed. If arranging a meeting be sure to choose a public space and do not give personal details to people you have not met. To STOP text stop to 80098/89990. Service provided by No Goats Ltd. Help: 0207 720 7130. ALL SERVICES*: By texting any shortcode you consent to the owner of that shortcode sending you the occasional marketing message. To opt out of receiving these send NO INFO to 80098. DATA PROTECTION: Service provided by JMedia UK Ltd, SW4 7BX, 0207 720 7130. We will collect the details you provide and may send you details of other services and events operated by us. We may pass your details onto this newspaper for marketing or PhonePayPlus for regulatory purposes. Advertisers may come from our national database and from our pdc app. w/c 08/08/16

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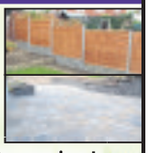

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3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree.
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5 Business & Farming

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business directory

business opportunities

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6 Property

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7 Jobs

building & construction

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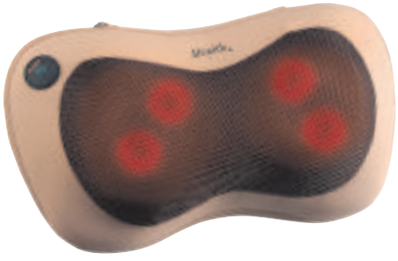

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Cannock hockey club's title-winning line-up of 1996 – the first of seven league championships during a 10-year period of dominance

Bobby Crutchley is now England national coach

Cannock players celebrate winning the national league in 1998

Club champions go for gold in Olympics role

THIS year marks the 20th anniversary since the Cannock Men's Hockey team won their first national championship. This success, in 1995/96, was the first of many in what was a dominant period for the side.

Since the league's inception in 1988/89, Cannock have won the National League seven times, with all seven titles coming in a 10-year period, starting with that 1996 triumph.

During the same period, Cannock also won three national cups and lifted the double in both 1998 and 2005.

Cannock's success was highlighted by the personal achievements of a number of the players. From 1998-2004 Cannock were proudly represented by a number of players at Olympic Games. Craig Parnham competed at both Sydney 2000 and Athens 2004, Jimi Lewis was also at Sydney and Chris Mayer competed four years previously in Atlanta.

Treasured

After such successful careers at Cannock, and at national level, all three have taken the opportunity to be involved in coaching.

Parnham is the current USA women's head coach, Lewis, a former netminder, is the current goalkeeper coach for the German national team, while Mayer currently coaches at Solihull School, having previously coached for England, and Leicester Ladies.

All three hold treasured memories of their time at Cannock, most notably their play-off success against Reading in 1999, in which all three played. The game went to penalties after Cannock fought back from 3-1 down to draw. Lewis earned hero status, saving three of the six flicks he faced.

Mayer saw it as the ultimate achievement. "It was the first year that play-offs had been done, we had won the league at a canter but you could only call yourselves champions if you won the final. We did."

SPORTING FEATURE

By Adam Cooper

"We had won the league at a canter but you could only call yourselves champions if you won the final. We did."

It wasn't until the late-1980s that Cannock began to be recognised as an elite club. The biggest step was qualifying for the National League in 1988, meaning the club could compete and attract some of the sport's biggest names. What followed was a dominant 10 years and Cannock's most successful period to date.

The 90s saw Cannock recognised as an elite coaching and training club, which in turn boosted their status, though Lewis admits he found it tough to leave Havant, where he had previously spent his entire career.

"I'd moved up through the youth teams into the first team. We got relegated in the 1996/97 season and to continue competing for a spot in the men's senior national team I decided I needed to be playing for a Premier League team," he said.

"I knew a lot of Cannock players through the national team set up and I liked the working man's attitude of the club."

Mayer, meanwhile, saw it as an opportunity to follow in his family's footsteps. Having watched his elders play before him for a number of years, he wanted to continue the family legacy.

He said: "My father was a player at the club and both my brother and I used to go and watch him play. Once old enough I started to play for the club. My first game was for the sixth team when I was 11. I played left wing. We lost 10-0! My grandfather, uncle and brother all played at Cannock too."

Parnham's decision was based simply on Cannock's status as the best in the country.

With the Rio Olympics now under way, both Lewis and Parnham, who will be coaching their respective nations at the Games against Team GB, coached by former Cannock team-mate Bobby Crutchley who has been involved with the national side since 2005.

During his playing career Crutchley played worldwide for both club and country. At club level, he played in Australia and Italy as well as at a number of clubs in England and won numerous titles at both Cannock and Hounslow. Crutchley was top scorer in all three countries and earned the right to play at national level when he won bronze at the 1998 Commonwealth Games.

Crutchley also took the opportunity to coach part-time, gaining valuable experience with regard to his current position as England first-team coach.

He said: "I had done a lot of coaching while still playing, so had a significant amount of experience when I finished playing. I then got really lucky getting the job at the University of Bath, where a number of other sports were based, so I got the opportunity to learn from a lot of highly successful coaches. During this time I started to work with the England junior teams and gradually got more opportunities."

Crutchley is hoping to lead England to their first gold medal since 1988, Lewis will be seeking a back-to-back gold medal with the German national team, while Parnham will strive for the USA women's first ever Olympic gold.

Chris Mayer - family affair

Craig Parnham in action for Cannock

Jimi Lewis – penalty hero in 1999

Just champion as Cannock celebrate the National League winners trophy in 2003

Sport

Hockey champions now going for Olympic gold

Page 39

Badgers set up Scholars FA Cup clash

Brocton 2 Walsall Wood 1 – FA Cup Extra Preliminary Round.

IT was Brocton who went through to face Chasetown on August 20. thanks to a Paul Mahon goal four minutes from time.

It was an end to end competitive opening without either keeper being troubled. Then on 13 minutes Louis Harris won the ball in the centre, played a pass forward to find Karl Edwards left of the box. His far post cross was fractionally too high for Harris who'd raced into the box but could only head wide.

The Badgers broke the deadlock on 40 minutes when from a quick counter attack the ball was played forward to skipper Sean Kinsella who laid the ball off quickly to his right to find Edwards, who went on a diagonal run before hitting a sweet low drive into the bottom left hand corner of the net. It was nearly two when three minutes later Lomas crossed low from the left, Dominic Dell's first time drive pushed away by keeper Conor McCarthy.

The Badgers had the first chance of the second half when on 53 minutes Kinsella was strong on the right of the box before crossing beyond the far post, Lomas looping a header back across goal, McCarthy at full stretch tipping the ball over the top.

On 77 minutes a high ball forward for Wood saw the Badgers defence misread the bounce completely, allowing Harry Harris to race into the box, just left of centre before calmly sliding the ball past the advancing Calum Barrett in the home goal.

With Wood defenders looking for an offside flag that never came, substitute Mahon ran on to give keeper McCarthy no chance and the Badgers held out reasonably comfortably to move into the next round.

Dennant is in the money after world No 8 sent packing

BLOXWICH darter Matthew Dennant is joint 134th on the Order of Merit, having picked up £2,500 so far.

It follows two Players Championship events last weekend.

First came the opportunity to gain a place for September's European Grand Prix, to be held in Germany at Sindelfingen's Glaspalast. Dennant lost 6-5 to James Hubbard.

The second qualifier was for October's German Darts Championship, the last European Tour tournament of the year, at Halle 39 in Hildesheim.

Dennant got past Jim Walker 6-3, before he went down by the same verdict to Justin Pipe.

Dennant and Wolverhampton's Wayne 'The Wanderer' Jones returned to the same venue for two Players Championship events, by virtue of their Pro Tour cards.

Dennant picked up £500 for reaching the second round on Saturday, holding his nerve as a 4-0 lead was cut to 4-3 before he beat world No 8 Robert Thornton 6-3, before then going down 6-2 to Jeffrey de Graaf.

Singh adds to his double success

Darts

Winner Jordan Singh

JORDAN Singh claimed his first BDO ranking title in two years after going all of the way at the European Youth Open.

The England Youth international was the top boy in the prospects' ranks competing at the same venue in Blackpool as the organisation's men and women.

The 17-year-old, from Darlaston, who lives in Walsall, had previously taken international and British Open honours, but last weekend's glory ended a long-wait to make it a hat-trick, beating Bradley Brooks in the final, who had overcome Dudley's Reece Colley in the last four. That was one prize settled on the inaugural European Darts Weekend at the Norbreck Castle Hotel.

Tipton's Jamie Hughes recorded the best run of the West Midlands throwers in the Saturday's European Classic, reaching the last 32 before defeat to Bryn Suckley, who had earlier beaten Bloxwich's Shaun Carroll.

Cannock's Mark Craddock, Wednesbury's Matthew Dicken, Wolverhampton's Michael Baker and Tipton's Chris Glover all bowed out after their first tie.

Hughes was also the pick of the West Midlands' darters in Sunday's European Open, reaching the last 16.

He reached the Group Four final, but was thwarted 4-2 by Brian Dawson.

Carroll made it to the last 32 in Group Five, while Baker got to the last 64 in Group Two.

Craddock, after a bye, was beaten 4-1 by Matt Padgett at the last 128 stage in Group Five, after Dicken and Glover had already gone out.

CLINICAL START FOR SADDLERS

Walsall 3 AFC Wimbledon 1

A NEW season, a new team and a new-look Saddlers side that's more in keeping with boss Jon Whitney.

Clinical Walsall rolled up their sleeves and battled their way to an opening day victory over AFC Wimbledon.

Debut goals from Simeon Jackson and Erhun Oztumer as well as an impressive cameo from youngster Amadou Bakayoko ensured the Saddlers made a dream start to the campaign.

But this was a different Walsall to the one that narrowly missed out on promotion following defeat in the play-offs. Wimbledon, with their direct and physical style, are the exact type of side the Saddlers struggled against last year – with the 4-0 loss at Bradford a prime example.

The Dons' game plan was simple – pump diagonal balls forward in a bid to maximise pressure on Walsall's defence.

In many aspects it worked, with Neal Ardley's side dominating long spells and arguably creating the more clear-cut chances.

But Walsall had the quality that mattered at both ends of the pitch.

Struggled

Oztumer put them ahead with a magical free-kick early on, the Turkish Messi curling a strike over the wall that flicked off the inside of the post before nestling into the net. From that point though, they struggled to get out of third gear.

Wimbledon should have pulled level when Chris Whelpdale turned James O'Connor in the box, but scuffed his effort wide.

Then, just minutes later, the Saddlers were hugely indebted to Neil Etheridge after the keeper made a fantastic double save. to deny Lyle Taylor then Andy Barcham.

Walsall's answer was to go further ahead, with Jackson scrambling home an Oztumer free-kick.

Jackson added his second with less than 20 minutes to go, after sterling work by substitute Bakayoko, before the Dons pulled back a late consolation with a Lyle Taylor penalty after he had been brought down by Rico Henry.

It may not have been perfect, but new-look Walsall came through the opening day with an awful lot of positives.

Saddlers sub Franck Moussa goes to ground in a tussle with Dean Parrett

Birch key to Lockmen's backs-to-wall win

Pegasus 0 Willenhall Town 2

WILLENHALL produced a superb backs-to-the-wall display at fancied Pegasus to come away with a deserved West Midlands Premier win.

Decisions conspired against them with a harsh red card and then an injury to the keeper but a stunning performance saw them take a two-goal lead before withstanding a late fightback.The Lockmen had the best chance of the first half when Chad Birch was sent tumbling in the box two minutres before the break but blazed the spot-kick over.

On 52 minutes, Darren Williams was dismissed for a clumsy challenge. Corey Hyde hit the free-kick well but Curwen saved superbly, getting injured in the process. Striker Matt Dorgan had to go between the sticks.

On 69 minutes, Birch held off four defenders before squaring for Kyle Thompson to blast home. It got even better on 89 minutes as Birch cut inside, beat two defenders, and blasted home.

Hatton leads his charges into battle

BOXING legend Ricky Hatton will co-promote on a bill at Walsall FC next month.

Hatton will be in the corner when two of his proteges feature in chief support bouts for the On the Rise card at the Banks's Stadium on September 2, held in conjunction with Errol Johnson's Black Country Boxing.

Headlining at the Stadium Suite will be Halesowen's super middleweight Lennox Clarke.

The undefeated 25-year-old is looking to extend his record to 13 wins, having already registered five TKOs, without reply.

Hatton will lead heavyweight Nathan Gorman and super welterweight Reuben Arrowsmith into battle, as part of the supporting cast.

Three more bouts comprise the under-card with Sandwell's Manny Zaber, Wolverhampton's Kyle Williams and Adam Harper all featuring.

Zaber, from Old Hill, has racked up seven wins from seven pro contests since turning over from the unlicensed circuit and is targeting a super featherweight showdown with Dudley's Les Byfield.

Former world kickboxing champion Williams. 24, aims to make it a hat-trick of boxing victories after outpointing Anwar Alfadli and Ian Halsall at bantamweight so far.

Harper, from Tewkesbury in Gloucestershire, has claimed British and International Challenge middleweight titles in just five contests since first punching for pay.

Tickets are on sale now at £30 for a standard unreserved seat with VIPs at £60, including a two-course meal on tables of 10.

For more information and to purchase, call the Walsall FC box office on 01922 651 414, extension 416.

Khalsa suffer late Cup sucker punch

Sporting Khalsa 1 Hanley 1

KHALSA were made to rue a host of missed chances as Hanley grabbed a late equaliser to set up an FA Cup extra preliminary round replay.

Khalsa took the lead in the fourth minute when last season's FA Cup leading scorer Craig Bannister netted a beauty of a free-kick from 25 yards. Dave Meese almost doubled the lead when he headed over the bar on 38 minutes.

But they suffered the sucker punch in the 90th minute when Marvin Nisbett dallied on the ball and Dan Cope was gifted with a free header from the resultant cross.

★★★

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